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LUCERIA:

TRAGEDY.

BY

HUGH STUART BOYD.

Πρῶτον μὲν δῆλον, ὅτι ἐ τῆς ἐπικεινῆς ἀνδρας δῆ μεταβάλλοντας φάνεσθαι ἐξ
εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν· ἐ γὰρ φοβερον', ἐδε ἐλεεινόν τῆτο, ἀλλὰ μιaron' ἐσιν.

ARISTOTELES DE POETICA.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

ANTONIO,	-	-	-	-	<i>King of Leon.</i>
RODOLPHO,	-	-	-	-	<i>King of Castile.</i>
ALMANZOR,	-	-	-	-	<i>Son to Rodolpho.</i>
FERNANDO,	-	-	-	-	<i>A Castilian General.</i>
BERNARDO,	-	-	-	-	<i>A Priest.</i>
CONRAD,	-	-	-	-	<i>Friend to Fernando.</i>
STEPHANO,	-	-	-	-	<i>An Officer of Antonio's.</i>
CARLOS,	-	-	-	-	<i>Confident to Almanzor.</i>

WOMEN.

LUCERIA,	-	-	-	-	<i>Princess of Leon.</i>
AGNES,	-	-	-	-	<i>Her Attendant.</i>

SCENE—*Leon.*



LUCERIA.

ACT I.

SCENE *a Rampart.*

Enter Antonio.—Stephano seen at a distance. Day-break.

Antonio.

MY daughter's safety, and my country's doom,
A few short hours will seal ! To th' evening orb,
Who shed erewhile her silver-beaming light
On yonder towers, succeed the purple rays
Which introduce the morn, the fatal morn !
Perhaps the last Antonio e'er shall see.
And may it be so, should it prove the last
Of Leon's freedom ! Yes, 'tis fit, my country,
That when thou fall'st, thy monarch with thee fall !
Must the dear interests of so many years
To-morrow then expire ? Alas ! ere then
How many valiant hearts shall bleed in fight !
How many tender bosoms break at home !

[Stephano advances,

All's right, Stephano,

I may trust thy looks.

Steph.

E'en so, my lord;

The longing soldiers count the hours till day,
Or grasp their spears, impatient till they're dy'd
(Heav'n willing) in the blood of the Castilians.

Ant. And the young stranger—hast thou yet beheld him?

Steph. Hourly, this night, I've gone th' accustomed round,

And still perceiv'd him in the self-same state,
Beneath the tow'r that flanks the western rampart,
Pale and immovable. Save that at times
He'd raise his eyes in agonies to heav'n,
Then, sighing, cast them on the cloister's walls.

Ant. The cloister said'st thou?

Steph. The cloister, sir, within whose sanctuary
You late deposited your princely daughter
To wait the issue of to-morrow's war.

Ant. I recollect—And does that noble youth—
But see, he comes—how mournful is his brow!

Enter Almanzor.

Alm. O! long desired, and evermore withheld,
Sweet peace of mind, thou child of flatter'd fancy,
And hope, the wretch's last deceitful friend,
Are ye for ever vanish'd?
Antonio here!

Ant. Came you to seek me?

Alm. Seek you? Oh, most happy
If I had never known you! at this hour
If I were ignorant of Antonio's name!
Still had I been the wretch I was before,

But not what now I am; so lost to hope,
And what's more dear, so nearly lost to honour,
That Fortune's self, astonish'd, turns away,
Affrighted at the work of her own malice.

Ant. Think'st thou that Fortune bears thee special
hate?

But thus it ever is with those who suffer;
Yet know, desponding youth, that some may feel,
And all are liable to woes like thine.

This morn, I am a monarch and a father,
As each how blest! the close of day may see me
A slave! (O name by Spaniards ever curst!)
And what is worse, the parent of a slave;
Doom'd then to answer for a people's chains,
And heavier far than these—a people's tears;
Tears for their brothers, sons, and fathers, slain—
Ere that sad hour, may the Castilian sword
Descend with mortal force upon Antonio,
And some kind spirit stop Luceria's breath!

Alm. Ah! breathe not such a wish on her whose life
Angels should join to shield. Avert, it heav'n,
That slav'ry vile, or death so premature,
Become her lot—'twere criminal to think it—
Not to prevent it then! all terms would fail
T' express—be not amazed, Antonio; trust me
There's not a heart in Leon more reveres,
Or sword that would more eager strike for, you;
This is the day! let protestations cease—

Ant. What, gen'rous stranger, wilt thou stand a
friend

To threat'ned Leon? Save one subject's life,
 Prolong one hour the freedom of my country,
 Ask any recompence, despair of none.
 Fly to the field! eclipse thy former self!
 Divide the wreath of glory with Antonio!
 He sees no rival in his country's friend,
 But second in his soul implants him—Heavens,
 What unforeseen despair is this I see!
 What agitates thy frame thus deeply?

Alm.

Now,

Now fate, thou'rt satisfied!—sure I'm deceiv'd;
 No, I could ne'er agree—Antonio, speak—
 Say—did I offer—have I sworn to join thee
 Against Castile?—against my native land?

Ant. Ha! art thou of Castile?

Steph.

A spy among us!

Accurst the hour which brought you wand'ring here.

Alm. That hour—yes, 'twas indeed accurst!—A
 spy!

Injurious slanderer, hence!

Ant. (to Stephano.) Peace, and retire,

This instant hence! nor let one word escape thee.

[*Exit Stephano.*

Alm. Antonio, tell me now if I be fallen;

Sure I must be the lowest of the low,

When such a thing as he, just parted hence—

Preserve my senses, heav'n! in such as he

To meet with a reviler! said he spy?

Well 'tis not worth the thought; all may be right

Before the rising of another sun.

Ant. (aside.) O Leon, what a champion hast thou lost !

Yet still perhaps—detested thought expire,
And let the breast which form'd thee be thy grave !
Think not I view thee with abhorrent eyes.

[to Almanzor.

Unknown, I still esteem'd thee, and ev'n now,
Thy foe confirm'd, I feel for thy distress ;
But whence the source ?

Alm. Has fame, or malice, call it as thou wilt,
Which has, I doubt not, often blazon'd to thee
Rodolpho's name, the sovereign of Castile,
Inform'd thee nothing of that monarch's son ?

Ant. His son ? I've heard—but canst thou be the
friend

Of that unfortunate, that guilty prince,
Who, having played the traitor, basely fled,
And in inglorious exile hides his shame,
Or forms new projects ?

Alm. That unfortunate,
That fugitive am I—but not that traitor !

Ant. Traitor ! forget the word ; Almanzor's none.
Since thou art he. O haste to tell me how
This cruel blot obscured so bright a name.

Alm. Perhaps thou dost not know Rodolpho's
character :

It is a portrait which no son should draw ;
Yet will his actions speak, and loudly too——
O Isidor, thou injur'd, good old man !
For thy true services, thy countless merits,

What was thy recompence ?

Th' assassin's dagger struck thee to the ground,
And menial hands interr'd thy hallow'd corse.

You knew him not, Antonio ; if you had,
You'd more than pardon me ; but for this man,
My father could not now have sway'd Castile.

At length the voice of envy rose against
The noblest of mankind ! my father listen'd,
——I implor'd in vain. One day beheld

The vet'ran spoil'd of all his long-earn'd honours ;
Indignant he forsook th' ungrateful court,
To terminate in some obscurer spot

His guiltless days. O had I follow'd him
And shar'd his fate, I should not-then have liv'd
To curse a father, to survive my friend,

My fame, my peace, and ev'ry good in life.

At length Rodolpho, seemingly restor'd

To reason's laws, recall'd the noble exile ;

How I applauded then my steadfast sorrow,

Which melted the stern king ! how scann'd the hours

Until the night arriv'd which should restore

His country's champion, and Almanzor's friend !

At length it came—and all his wrongs were ended !

He bled—he fell—he died !

Ant.

Ill-fated man !

And by what means ?

Alm.

Oh ! do not ask me that ;—

Thy rising horror tells me thou hast found it.

I make no mention of the time I spent

(The murd'rer yet unknown) in fruitless tears

And vows of vengeance, till one faithful man,
 Touch'd by my transports, gave me the confession
 Made by his slave when dying, that 'twas he
 Rodolpho bade to shed the blood of Isidor.
 I begg'd him shrink not at a second murder,
 But let me perish next. 'Twas this, Antonio,
 This tribute paid to a departed hero,
 That stamp'd me traitor; for Rodolpho's rage
 I cannot paint it—true, he did not grant
 My prayer at full, he did not take my life,
 But oh! he stabbed my fame! nor less imputed
 Than that with Isidor I had conspired
 Against his crown. Heav'n's angels heard the charge,
 Yet none descended to proclaim it false.
 Thus sinking with distress, detesting life,
 I car'd not where I fled,—till you, Antonio,
 Gave to my sorrows shelter; yet, ere long
 I found that they were destin'd ne'er to end.
 Luceria—Oh! what need I utter more?
 That fair!—that lovely!—that celestial—

Ant.

Hold!

First, like the banish'd Roman, raise your hand
 Against your country, yet, not like him, permit
 One tender thought to break the great resolve;
 Go, point your sword against your fellow-subjects,
 In her own blood deluviate Castilia,
 And verify your father's dark aspersions!
 Then, with approving heart and tranquil conscience,
 Adore the daughter of your country's foe.

Alm. Can words so bitter pass Antonio's lips?

Or is Luceria's sire, of all mankind,
Astonish'd at the love his child inspires ?

Ant. No, trust me, prince, he's not ; a dearer in-
mate,

Or less surprize, this bosom never knew.
Did but thy destiny depend on me .
It should not long be adverse. True, I cannot
Again restore thee thy lamented friend,
Yet still I can in part remove the cloud
That overshades thy name. Say, wert thou free,
What would be thy conduct towards thy country ?

Alm. To draw in her defence my sword on Leon.

Ant. Go then, and draw that sword—ne'er shall
thy voice,

O Calumny, be levell'd at Antonio
For having made a noble youth a traitor.
Haste, then, to gain anew thy ravish'd honour,
Nor let my innocent Luceria's charms
Be call'd the lures which led thee on to guilt ;
For thy desertion wouldst thou draw on her,
To latest times, reproach and vile invective ?

Alm. First may Almanzor be the scorn of men !
Yet excellent Antonio, thou to whom
I owe the resurrection of my fame,
Permit heart-rending sorrow's last effusion
To spend itself with thee.—If one of thine
This day should stretch me lifeless on the field,
Tell thou my father that his injur'd son
Ne'er breath'd one wish, ne'er knew one thought,
against him;

And should he fall a captive in thy power,
 O let a parent's guilt be ever sacred !
 Call not the shade of Isidor from rest,
 Nor pierce his spirit with Almanzor's wrongs.

Ant. I'll more than follow all thou canst require:
 And if thou see'st ere night this head laid low,
 Or by the victor's yoke, or death's cold arm,
 For the sire's sake wilt thou befriend the daughter,
 And act a guardian's and a brother's part,
 Nor plead thy love, nor seek t' estrange her soul
 From Leon's chains, and from her father's urn
 To Leon's spoiler ? Wilt thou swear to this ?

Alm. I will; and heav'n remain to me as constant
 As I to what I swear !

Ant. The approaching hour
 Forbids a longer converse. By this signet
 Shewn to Stephano, thou may'st pass the portal—

Alm. Are we yet mortal foes ? yet are our swords
 Aim'd at each other ?

Ant. True ! a friend's embrace
 I yet may grant thee.—

Adieu ! return to glory and be happy. [Exit.

Alm. Ah ! cruel mandate ! then farewell ye scenes,
 Where, for a while, misfortune slack'd her course ;
 If in the bloody toil I chance to perish,
 Still be my spirit to your haunts restor'd,
 And guard in death whom living it ador'd. [Exit.

SCENE—*The Garden of the Cloister.**Luceria and Agnes discovered.*

Agnes. Though I experience not your private sorrows,

I can conceive them, and conceiving, pity;
And if I could assuage——

Luc. No more; I know thee
Most friendly and most tender, but indeed
Thou canst not pity what thou dost not know,
Nor when thou know'st, alleviate. To unite
With me in grief, to mix thy sighs with mine,
To join with me in fruitless prayers for peace,
Then weep with me their failure, will be soon
All thy sad office. Oh! my friend, I would not
Distress thy gentle nature, but I fear
That 'twill be thine (nor can I tell how soon)
To mark the last vibrations of my life,
Catch the last glance of these expiring eyes,
And beg a blessing on my parted spirit.

Agnes. Oh! for the sake of your poor faithful slave,
In pity yield not to this blind despair:
Each passing day, and each succeeding night,
These cloister'd walls re-echo to your sighs,
Each sainted shrine is moisten'd with your tears,
And ev'ry sense is woe.

Luc. Long, long these walls
Shall hear my sighs, long shall these sainted shrines
Attest the sorrows of the most forlorn one

That ever bow'd before them. Ye dark bow'rs,
 Ye pines high-waving, and ye gloomy shades,
 Will ye receive within your hallow'd coverts
 A being dead to piety and nature,
 Who cherishes an int'rest in her heart
 But too injurious to the best of fathers?
 Ah! such an one indeed should fly from day:
 Then hide me, take me ne'er to leave you more.

Agnes. Perish this resolution! Think, my princess,
 When the high pow'r of heav'n shall take from Leon
 Its present guardian, your valu'd father——

Luc. Oh! may he live till time and being fail,
 Forgetful of a too unworthy daughter.
 May peace and full prosperity attend
 His steps for ever; may each day behold him
 More lov'd, more honour'd, and more happy!

Enter Antonio.

Ant. Whose welfare is it now implor'd so sweetly,
 That e'en his enemies might join the prayer?

[*Exit Agnes.*

Luc. Ah! am I not deceiv'd? No—'tis indeed
 That lov'd, unhop'd-for sight: Say how, my father,
 Could you thus long defraud your anxious child
 Of the appointed hour? 'tis long elaps'd,
 And much I fear'd that I had been forgot.

Ant. Thy pardon, ever welcome, ever dear!
 A conference with our guest, the youthful stranger,
 Detain'd me, or thus long I had not staid.

Luc. (*aside.*) Oh! happy thou, to share Almanzor's presence!

Ant. (aside.) Now then to wound that peace more dear than mine——

This stranger (could'st thou have conceiv'd Luceria?)
Is now Almanzor prov'd, Castilia's heir.

Luc. Just heav'n! and you, my Lord, how have you acted

Now that you know him?

Ant. Did'st thou know thy father
Thou would'st not ask.

Luc. It is confirm'd! Almanzor,
Adieu, for ever!—Hast thou forc'd him then
To join his cruel sire in arms against thee?
Oh! cruel to require it! cruel he
Not to refuse!

Ant. Calm thee, my child, and hear me.

Luc. I cannot hear thee, I can nothing hear
Save the dread clash of your assailing swords.
Ungrateful as thou art, Almanzor, dar'st thou
Aim at that gen'rous heart that proudly cherish'd
thee,

As much for thy misfortunes as thy virtues?
First may thy life——No, poor abandoned son,
I will not call another evil on thee;
Be that Rodolpho's task.

And thou, my father, hear'st thou not a voice
E'en from the inmost bosom of the earth,
By which she calls upon thee not to slay
The noblest of her children? Thus behold
For the last time, I throw thee in my arms,
And, ere thou leav'st me, never to return,

Or else return the murd'rer of Almanzor,
A moment stay, and see thy daughter die.

Ant. O Leon! Leon! would I lov'd thee less,
Or lov'd thee better! See thee die, my daughter!
Alas! I fear I have no daughter now;
Thou canst not bear to think thy sire must die,
Yet bear'st to fill his living hours with bitterness.
Yes, keep thy word, and let him see thy death
Before thou see'st his shame; nor know, my child,
Thy father liv'd to see thee weep the loss
Of Leon's enemy—and wept like thee!

Luc. Oh! cease—forebear, my father—yes, I'll live
To see thy glory.

Ant. My best beloved, thou art my only glory!
—So soon to sep'rate, wilt thou not afford me
A word, a look? E'en now my soldiers wait me.

Luc. Why did you bless me, heav'n, with such a
father,
Then ere I'd time to thank you for the gift
Tear it for ever from me? Yes, I'm certain
This day is fatal to Luceria's peace;
I'm certain I shall lose you!

Ant. Come, no more!
Would it not please thy little coward heart
To keep thy father from the dreadful field,
Enfolded safe within thy tender arms?

(*running to her.*)

Oh! my Luceria, my beloved child,
Would I might never leave them!

Luc. Farewel, father!

O that my voice would pierce the orbs above,
 And give each ruling star a brighter influence !
 Tho' men may better serve, and angels guard thee,
 Yet none of these can hold thee dear as I do ;
 Go, be thy surest shield my prayers and tears,
 To me alone consign the parent's fate,
 Ye guardian pow'rs ! and be the monarch's yours.
 Not e'en the proudest tenant of the sky
 Would blush to listen, or refuse to grant
 The prayer inspir'd by patriotic love.
 Was ever child, beneath th' expanse of heav'n,
 So proud, so blest, so thankful, as Luceria ?

(A military air is heard at a distance.)

And must thou fly to danger, ruin, death ?
 Must, too, Almanzor—Oh ! my father, hear me !

Ant. Too long already have I linger'd here ;
 Thou must not plead, nor must I listen more.
 Bleed on, thou heart of flint ! avenge at full
 Each sigh, each tear, each prayer of her's unanswer'd.
 Farewel, my dearest, loveliest child, farewel !
 Just heav'n ! to you this treasure I bequeath ;
 Should I, its guardian late, ere long, be dust,
 Then if I ever prov'd myself thy servant,
 O then adopt her thou, and prove her father !—
 O Leon ! pardon ; let me satisfy
 One tender claim, and then—*(He embraces Luceria.)*
 Now Leon, triumph ! I am wholly thine. *[Exit.]*

Luc. O heav'n protect him ! nor forsake Almanzor !

Agnes. (entering.) Return, I pray, my princess, to
 the convent.

Luc. No more of princess ! These sad shades
henceforth

Shall be my court, their mournful inmate I.

Too dear Almanzor ! ne'er will I ascend

The hateful throne that's sprinkled with thy blood.

Witness, ye saints, I swear it ! let me now

Haste to confirm it on your holy altars ;

There with unwearied knees implore the skies,

In peace my tears shall flow, my pray'rs arise.

Soon may they, bounteous heav'n, thy throne attain,

Nor let them, bounteous heav'n, ascend in vain ;

Oh ! spare a daughter's and a lover's woe,

And guard the worthiest of thy works below.

Yet let me from my complaints the heav'ns release,

For fear, and love, and life itself, must cease

Ere thou, sad heart, shalt know returning peace.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE—*A Hall in the Palace of Antonio.*

The shouts of victory. Drums and trumpets heard without. Almanzor rushes forward through the back scene.

Almanzor.

CEASE ! cease ye torturing sounds, ye notes of triumph !

Die in your airy course, nor rend the heart

You never more can fire with martial ardour.

Too well I know your purport ; Leon fall'n !

Antonio slain ! Luceria made a slave !

And mis'ry, insult, and dishonour, doom'd

To one whose crimes are friendship, love, and truth.

'Tis fix'd ; I'll fly from these o'erwhelming evils.

Condemn me not, ye who have better borne

Misfortune's pangs : you had, perhaps, a friend

To lighten what you suffer'd ;—I have none !

(Rushing out, Fernando meets him.)

Fern. 'Tis false ! forbear my prince——

Alm. Fernando here !

Thou soul of truth, thou first of faithful friends !

Fern. And is Almanzor here, his sword unstain'd
With Leon's blood, and rais'd against himself ?

Alm. Hold ! hold, Fernando ! did'st thou know
the cause——

Yet, ere I tell the dreadful tale, I swear
By ev'ry holy pow'r my will was guiltless ;
Yet guiltless is this late inactive arm,
Yet pure this heart which bleeds in ev'ry vein.
This morning, guided by the vile Stephano,
Was I prepar'd to quit these long-lov'd ramparts,
To prove that I could love Castilia more ;
When (if I'm dear to thee, prepare to tremble)
The wretch of narrow soul decoy'd my steps
To a remote confinement, where, ov'rpower'd
By the curst partners of his fraud, Time fled,
And saw the field unvisited by me.

Fern. Alas ! you could not suffer more than I do ;
But trust me, dearest prince, lost as you are,
Envelop'd in this cloud of infamy,
More from my soul do I respect and serve you
Than e'er your father in his proudest glories.

Alm. My ever-constant friend ! I feel 'tis selfish
To give thee my afflictions—yet so sweet
The soothings of compassion ! but remember
Ill-fated Isidor, how did he expiate
The crime of having been attach'd to me !

(*Trumpets without.*)

I hear the sound of triumph ! 'tis my father
E'en now approaching. I am ill prepar'd
To bear the charge of fresh-imputed guilt ;
'Twas all I wish'd, to see thy face and die.
Keep close the secret of my plighted love,

Destroy those letters which convey'd it to thee;
And should malignant Slander raise her voice,
Respect Almanzor's fame. (*going, returns.*)
Become not for my sake a faithless subject ;
Thou canst forget those wrongs which I can pardon.
[*Exit.*]

Fern. 'Tis well, deluded hapless youth ! thy love
An evil agent shall be made, to work
Thy own destruction, and thy father's fall.
Now, were e'en fate itself in compact with me,
And all the pow'rs of malice on my side,
Nought could have chanc'd more prosp'rous ; tho'
nought else,
It had suffic'd he was the friend of Isidor :
How does that name still kindle my resentment !
Rodolpho ow'd to him Castilia's throne,
That throne which else was mine ! I well remember
How prosper'd the sedition I had rais'd
'Gainst our late queen ; the article of peace
(Her hand) was nearly mine, when this Rodolpho,
A younger brother from some foreign court,
Came in to her assistance, and supported
By Isidor, that loyal wretch, obtain'd
The prize which I had look'd to. Curs'd abasement !
How could I deign to live on terms of pardon ?
Thanks to my fav'ring genius, Isidor
Is harmless now ; still I've an adverse genius,
And see, he comes ! a pompous train attending ;
What exultation swells his haughty soul !
Well, triumph now ! thou shalt not triumph long.

Enter Rodolpho attended, Antonio prisoner.

Rod. Here tarry for a while ; let conquest's pride
Yield to that rest which conquest's toil demands,
Yet shall not mem'ry rest.

O thrice illustrious day !—My friends, what say you ?
Doth it not seem that all-propitious Pow'rs
Smile on my fortune ? Never, sure, success
Was half so glorious ; there behold the proof.

(pointing to Antonio.)

Ant. A proof how dearly that success was bought.

Rod. This from a captive ? But, perhaps, thy
thoughts

Fly from thy chains, and deem thee still a king.

Ant. And in the hearts of those around me, more
Perhaps I'm deem'd than thou. A loyal mind,
Whether its sovereign governs on his throne,
Or rests in shameful bonds, is proud alike
To own, to honour, to adore, its king.
Go, haughty victor, seek the scene of war
Where lie my martyr'd soldiers' poor remains ;
Then turn thy eyes on thy own train of flatt'ers,
And vainly seek in them, and in thyself,
One vestige of the pure, the pious flame
Which taught those loyal victims how to die,
And taught Antonio how to scorn their murd'rer.

Rod. Presumptuous madness ! There, behold,
vain hero,

(points to the captive soldiers.)

The vouchers of thy greatness, and my loss !

(ironically.)

Scarce I myself can credit my own glory ;
 The proud Antonio, is he really mine ?
 And do I rule where late he rul'd ? O Fortune !
 Thy fav'rite hath not thanks enough to pay thee.

Ant. Close, close my eyes,
 For ever close upon this sight !
 Is this your fate, ye friends of fall'n Antonio ?
 Were your brave natures form'd for chains and
 slav'ry ?

Now let the oldest vet'ran of you say,
 If e'er before he saw your monarch weep.—
 Ye domes, ye walls, which late beheld my sway,
 Shake, shake to atoms o'er this boaster's head,
 Nor echo longer to a tyrant's voice.
 Yet, no—once more resound your master's thanks :
 One prize I had, one darling of my soul,
 And midst the storm which rose this adverse day,
 That, that is safe ! shelter'd in heav'n's own dwelling ;
 Blest be that heav'n which robb'd me of a kingdom,
 But, as a father, left me undespoil'd !

Enter Conrad, Luceria, and Agnes.

Ha ! holy angels !

Rod. Another conquest ! and a fairer too !
 Yes, more than mortal fair. Thus some bright planet,
 Not seen in common with its sister stars,
 Sudden appears, when all's serene around.
 Forgive a victor's privilege, Antonio,
 And tell me, as thou hop'st thy fate to prosper,
 Know'st thou this nameless miracle ?

Ant. . . . I do.

Agnes. Unpitying Pow'rs ! I fear she faints—
no help ?

Ant. Stand off, vile slaves ! nor with unhallow'd
succour

Usurp a father's claim. Oh ! my Luceria,
Here's yet one shelter for thee !

Rod. How ! thy daughter ?

Ant. My daughter—and thy slave ? slave, could
I say ?

Yet heed it not, (*to her*) this world is prone to
changes—

Curse on that stoic's comfort ! where's the wisdom
That bids you weep with those you cannot help ?

O Leon ! be not jealous of this sorrow ;

For thee, heav'n knows, I've done my part.—Ro-
dolpho,

I read new evils in thy louring eyes,

Such evils as a parent should not name ;

Yet mark me ! dares thy soul conceive one thought

Of such, these hands, defenceless as they are,

(Thou spirit of her mother bear me witness)

Shall tear it forth from its unworthy mansion.

Rod. Who acts the boaster now ? Dare I not
part you ?

It seems my words were air, my pow'r a fable ;

Thus to my vassals sham'd ! it shall not be !

You, Conrad, bear the captive king from hence ;

You, Carlos, take his daughter to your charge ;—

How's this ? not yet obey'd ! Ye villain slaves—

Ant. Die ere you tear her from me ! Vain, fond
wretch,

Canst thou not keep thy child ? 'Tis done—she's gone !

Luc. Oh ! if you cannot save me, dear my father, Support and speak to me !

Ant. 'Tis heav'n, my child,
That must support thee, for thy father cannot.
Look round thee, and inform thee what he is,
Then seek protection from a better hand.
Now would a heathen father bid thee die,
And cease to be a captive ; but a christian
Tells thee to be resign'd—to live and hope. [*Excunt.*
Manet Rodolpho.

Rod. Let me not ponder on thy words, Antonio,
Thou truly royal spirit !—
Now to my new-gain'd throne, from thence to hear
Anew the acclamations of Castile,
And shew all Leon what Rodolpho is.

(*going out, he meets Almanzor.*)

What sudden vision's this ? Am I awake,
Or is it not Almanzor ?

Alm. 'Tis your son.
You, Sir, I trust, have long forgot that name,
And well you may ! the sight of one who's injur'd
Is little welcome to a conscious breast.
Ah ! different far the state of yours and mine ;
Fenc'd is your heart all o'er with folds of steel,
Impenetrable, tranquil ! while despair,
And grief, and passion, all combine to drink
To the last drop the vital source of mine,
Accessible to ev'ry pain but guilt.

Rod. Away with art like this, 'twere fruitless now;
My sway, my triumph, are confirm'd above
The efforts of thy perfidy to shake them.
In truth 'tis a misfortune that Antonio
Should gain so little by his new ally;
Thy valour in his cause I fear was spar'd.

Alm. O Judge of heav'n and earth, is this thy
justice,
To let the plots of darkness thus prevail?
My father! kneeling thus behold me swear
(And if 'tis false may the immortal Pow'rs
Here strike me breathless, ne'er to rise again)
Had not a perfidy, by hell inspir'd,
Detain'd me from the field——

Rod. Traitor, no more!

Enter Fernando.

Alm. Fernando! friend, Fernando!

Fern. Alas! my prince,
I wish'd no influence to prevail but yours;
Yet since you honour me with this appeal,
I'll pledge my life that truth is on your side;
Let, Sir, your wonted clemency prevail.

(to Rodolpho.)

Rod. Canst thou plead clemency for such as he?
Accurst be all who breathe the air which thou dost!

(to Almanzor.)

Hence! fare thee well! for ever fly my sight,
Deplore thy treason, end thy shameful days,
And hide thy guilt beneath seclusion's veil. [*Exit.*]

Alm. Stay thee, my friend; I feel I shall not
trespass

Upon thy kindness long. O had I liv'd
 In those great times, when the distracted heart
 Might call the nearest weapon to its aid,
 And from some friend's kind hand receive the blow,
 Then should this hour my sum of mis'ry end,
 And that kind hand be thine !

Fern. (aside.) Prophetic be thy wish !

Alm. O sainted Isidor !

Look not below from thy divine abode,
 To see the object of thy earthly care
 Thus guiltless, yet thus wretched ! thus dishonour'd !
 Fernando, what a sight ! The sweet Luceria,
 Her lovely frame all trembling, scarcely able
 To see, for tears, her way, comes forward : thus
 Look'd poor Virginia, from a father torn,
 And left defenceless 'midst a ruffian crew.

Enter Luceria.

Luc. (kneeling to Almanzor.) O thou but late my
 conqueror ! deign to hear

One who ne'er knew a suppliant's task till now ;
 A wretched, an unfriended, hopeless creature,
 With nought to plead her cause but tears and
 phrenzy.

Till now secure in youthful careless happiness,
 My only sorrow was that others mourn'd,
 My only wish that all like me were happy.
 But now—proud Leon levell'd with the dust,
 The daughter of its lord in servile chains—
 O heav'n ! how grateful would Luceria feel
 If these were all the woes thou hadst ordain'd her !

Alm. (raising her.) Inhuman sire ! what hast thou not to answer ?

O ever-dear Luceria ! cease to weep,
And tell thy sorrows, ere that gentle heart
Burst with their weight.

Luc. No ; while you pity, I can bear them yet.
You know my father—you have lov'd him too,
But I have known him, and have lov'd him more ;
Think then what I must feel to lose him ! Yes,
Distrust me, prince ! too soon you'll do me justice ;
Yes, for a father's life these fears distract me ;
Nor will that life be left him, but on terms
Unfit for Leon's monarch ; he is proud,
And I am helpless ; hope should long have left me.

Alm. Say, first, Almanzor should have long forgot
me.

Oh, keep the friendly spirit still alive,
Nor suffer it to take its flight till then !

Agnes entering with a packet.

Agnes. This paper, Madam, from the holy fathers.

Luc. Whatever be the purport, I expect
Nought but fresh cause for sorrow (*opens it*). Most
amazing !

The words of the Superior here inform me,

(*to Almanzor.*)

The mystic scroll enclōs'd was found this morning
E'en at the feet of holy Marco's statue.

Alm. You tremble ; let me read it.—

What's here ? O transport, scarce to be believ'd,
Or scarcely then endur'd ! Oh, my Luceria !

Thus let me sanction, on this hand belov'd,
The homage which, till now, I dar'd not pay,
And thus too——

Luc. My Lord ! Oh, free me, I beseech you !

Fern. Come, madam, you'll forgive the prince's
haste ;

Look on the scroll yourself, behold pourtray'd
The words of heav'n——“ That ere to-morrow's dawn
“ Luceria and Almanzor must be one ;
“ That having on the altar pledg'd their vows,
“ They seek, without one fear, these walls again,
“ Yet keep meanwhile the silence of the grave.
“ Such is the will of Leon's guardian angel.”

Alm. And is his will thine also, dear Luceria ?
Blush as thou wilt, but only answer Yes.

Luc. (*faintly.*) The will of heav'n was ne'er by
me disputed ;—

And yet I would not hide it from my father ;
Distress as now he is, would it not cheer him
To think his daughter's happy ? Oh, Almanzor !
Since I perceive you have not lost that word,
I'll not retract—take then this hand—'tis yours ;
Yet, if you'll trust me, 'tis the good of Leon—

Alm. Enough ! thus let me hail the lovely gift.
Say, when will it be mine ? The means too——

Agnes. Within the labyrinth of cells beneath,
There's still on one deserted spot an altar ;
The chaplain of this palace knows it well.

Alm. Then let him be prepar'd to meet us there
Two hours ere midnight. Do not start, Luceria ;
Sure that is not too soon ? what says my love ?

Luc. That—if I can—I will be punctual too.

[*Exit with Agnes.*]

Alm. Thou loveliest of thy sex ! Let her be mine,
And Fate and I are friends.

Enter Carlos.

You here, good Carlos ?

Carlos. O my dear Lord, forgive my disrespect,
'Tis such a joy to see you ! 'tis no wonder
If I've forgot the message I was charged with ;
Hold—now it comes to mind. An aged friar

(*to him aside.*)

Just now accosted me without the walls,
And bade me tell you, Sir, this night to meet him
In a lone chapel underneath the cloister ;
By his directions I can guide you to it.

Alm. Lead on—my friend, excuse me for awhile.

[*Exit with Carlos.*]

Fern. That fellow has not talents, or he'd prove
Another Isidor. (*Enter Conrad.*) Well met ! success
Attends us tenfold, since the holy fraud,
The paper which I bid the friars place
At foot of Marco's statue——

Conrad.

To what end

I'm yet to learn.

Fern.

So dull of comprehension !

'Tis plain, if I can work Almanzor's ruin,
And to Rodolpho then assign the guilt,
Enrag'd Castile would hurl him from the throne,
So would the expected diadem be mine.

'Twas for that purpose I the fathers gain'd
 (Pretending 'twas for either country's good)
 So to dispose the forgery.

Conrad. Heav'n itself
 (So tame it took the insult) must be for you.

Fern. If I mistake not, fair Luceria's eyes
 Have made the king the rival of his son :
 This was my aim, when I desir'd thee feign
 To storm the hallow'd dwelling ; all-confounded,
 The trembling band resign'd their fainting charge.
 Oh, what an active field now lies before me !
 Yet 'midst the war of passions there engag'd,
 Most eminent in rank behold ambition,
 The first and longest inmate of the mind.
 Revenge at length may satiate on its object,
 Love may grow languid, rage may spend itself,
 Friendship may yield to absence or to int'rest,
 But 'tis alone ambition never dies. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE—*An antique Chapel, partly dilapidated ; an
 Altar discovered at one end.*

Enter Bernardo.

Bern. So, onward—the path's flint—and why
 heed that ?

Why heed the sense's suffering, when all here
 Has ceas'd long since to feel ? It should be so :
 But oh ! too oft a pang of human folly
 Informs this sicken'd heart it wants more hard'ning,
 Ye rugged stones that bear my weary feet,

How long will't be before it shares your nature ?
 Not till, like you, it's cold and void of life.
 Sure all who trod this holy place before
 Came full of nought but heaven, passionless
 And pious as the saint whom they invok'd.
 While I, a frail, complaining, son of earth,
 Come fill'd with all the weakness of mortality,
 Its cares and its affections. Nature ! nature !
 This holy vesture cannot cover thee.

Shame on this restless soul ! again in arms ?
 But here's the common cure (*takes out the Rosary*).
 Oh, fruitless ! fruitless !

Enter Almanzor and Carlos.

Alm. This is the place. And see, the holy father !

Carlos. The strangest of the kind that ere I saw !
 No benedicite ! no prayer ! no rev'rence !
 A monk to hold his peace when all else bless you !

[*Exit.*

Alm. Father, I hope I'm punctual.

Bern. Yes, Almanzor.

Alm. And who art thou that seem'st to know
 Almanzor ?

Bern. And what art thou that know'st not Isidor ?
 (*throwing back his cowl.*)

Alm. O Pow'r immortal ! Isidor ? that dear,
 That long-lost, murder'd, friend ? Yes, I do know
 thee !

Bern. O son of my affections ! long, most long,
 Since last these arms embrac'd so dear an object.
 Thou little know'st what hours of grief and care—

But hence with their remembrance! thou art here!
 Oh, might we part no more! I pray thee pardon
 An old man's selfish fondness; thou hast int'rests
 Which thou must follow, I have none but thee.

Alm. O Isidor, my father and my friend!
 Long absent, long lamented, now restor'd!
 And yet this meeting has its bitterness——
 O heav'n! are these the ensigns of thy fortune?
 Where's now the steel that cloth'd thy valiant
 limbs?

Where's now the falchion wont to grace thy hands?
 Where's now the plume that once adorn'd thy brows?
 This cowl, this hair-lin'd vest, are these thy portion?
 Oh, Isidor! it kills me——

Bern. Come, be cheer'd;
 'Twere well, my son, if in the course of life
 White hairs might gain no portion worse than these.

Alm. Ah! they should not be thine! But say,
 Say how the tomb relented and restor'd thee;
 Or rather, how the hand of heav'n preserv'd thee,
 And turn'd aside Rodolpho's murd'rous arm?

Bern. His arm! mistaken youth, (I'll not say
 impious)
 Know, he who sought my life, was not Rodolpho.

Alm. Now, prais'd be heav'n! my father's hands
 are guiltless!
 Receive, O Pow'r Supreme! this thankful tribute;
 These pangs of true contrition, too, receive,
 And may they expiate th' unconscious wrong.

Bern. Prosper thy pious off'ring! Dear Alman-
 zor,

Thou too, I fear, hast suffer'd since we parted ;
 And now thy friend, thy faithful Isidor,
 Must crush thy heart's last joy, must plant himself
 The thorns which pitying Fate would fain have
 spar'd thee—

—Thou know'st thy alter'd father had recall'd me,
 For thee, and thee alone, I deign'd return ;
 Pride dwells not long where'er affection dwelt.
 When as I journey'd through a lonely wood,
 The hir'd assassins met me ; short the contest,
 For soon a well-aim'd dagger pierc'd my breast.
 When he who struck, exclaim'd, To intercept
 That better fortune which Rodolpho meant thee,
 The master whom I serve hath sent thee this.
 The speaker, ('twill be death to thee to know)
 Was the slave and servant of Fernando !

Alm. 'Tis false ! 'twas all illusion ! Trust me, Isidor,
 If this had fall'n from any lips but thine,
 I should have call'd it a blasphemmer's tale,
 For well I know Fernando's noble heart :
 Yet wrong me not, my venerable friend !
 I swear, that could I once believe the fact,
 Thy precious blood should be aveng'd by his.

Bern. And think'st thou I could wear this holy
 habit

Conscious it cover'd a vindictive heart ?
 Now hov'ring o'er the precincts of the tomb,
 I must descend in peace with all mankind
 Ere heav'n grant peace to me.
 The blow was not a deep one, and the succour

Which some poor wand'ring foresters bestow'd,
Had nigh restor'd me, when the cruel news
Of thy untimely exile reach'd my ears.
'Twas then, for the first time, I curs'd Rodolpho ;
And vowing ne'er to seek his court again,
Fled hitherward ; unknown, distress, and poor,
I sought the shelter of the convent's roof,
To spend, in prayer, my last sad hours for thee ;
And, when fond mem'ry claim'd her banish'd rights,
Weep o'er the rusting sword which once I drew.
But now, Almanzor, now thy trial comes !
Last night, as ling'ring in the cloister'd aisle,
Counting my beads, and mingling your fond name
With ev'ry saint's, I heard two voices near ;
Our prior's and Fernando's ; but their business—
Religion, outraged, hides her humbled head !
Know, while thy soul, in love and rapture lost,
Dwells on the hope of wedding with Luceria,
Know, heav'n is wrong'd, and its commands were
forg'd !

Alm. Oh no ! I am not doom'd to be so wretched !—

Bern. Yes, dear unfortunate deluded youth,
She's lost, indeed, to thee. Oh, call to mind
The laws of heav'n, of nature, and thy country !
Can she wed thee, her country's second foe ?
Canst thou take her unsanction'd to thy arms
Without a father's blessing ? Canst thou—heav'n !
All-righteous heav'n, speak to his soul ! defend
Thy laws insulted, and thy rights abus'd !
—Yes, 'twas Fernando's self, that upright man,

Depos'd the impious scroll at Marco's feet ;
A snare well laid to catch thy heated soul.

Alm. Alas ! that soul is chill'd almost to death,
And e'en its anguish is but faintly felt ;
Yet soon, too soon, it wakes to sense and suffering.—
Oh ! cruel Isidor ! that hadst the heart
To see me yield to transport long unknown ;
Then rob me of it all !—my lov'd Luceria !
She was my joy on earth, my little heav'n,
All sorrow fled before her, nor e'en pleasure
Was worthy of the name till she appear'd.
And, O distracting sight ! behold that altar ;
There, Isidor ! this evening—Oh ! Luceria !

Bern. Why, let her come, and play the lovelorn
damsel ;

Be thou thyself, be deaf to her fond complaints,
And to her tears be marble. Though I would not
Draw, wilfully, one tear from female eyes,
(In that a soldier still,) yet would I never,
To stop their tears, do aught unworthy of me ;
And if thou must be doom'd a prey to weakness,
Be so for any thing besides a woman.

Alm. Hard as thou art, forbear th' unhallow'd theme ;
Know, there's no sacrifice that's short of honour,
Not life itself, should be denied a woman.
Sweet, lovely, helpless maiden, shall I spurn her
Thus from my bosom, while the mild consent
Yet vibrates on her lips, and coldly see
Her wounded spirit sink beneath the shock ?
Like to a tender bird, with ruthless hand

Dash'd on some stony crag, and left awhile
To flutter in its anguish and to die.

Oh ! heav'n and earth ! no saint would bear the
test ;

My life, my soul, my reason, all are hers.

Bern. Tis well. Fernando had advis'd thee better ;
The flatt'rer's cherish'd, and the friend is scorn'd.
Misguided, lost Almanzor ! fare thee well !—
Rodolpho, thou hast given me many a pang,
But I'll complain no more ; thy son outdoes thee !
(going.)

Alm. Stay, stay, so long apart, so lately met—
Stay, Isidor, forsake me not in anger !

Bern. Just heav'n ! thou know'st there's nought
on earth my age
Prizes so dear. My son ! my prince ! Almanzor !
See him on whose command whole troops have hung,
Entreat one boon of honour—and refus'd !
Thou couldst obey me once ; now wilt thou slight
me

Because this aged head has lost its honours,
And laugh with Fortune at thy fallen friend,
And finish what thy father but begun ?
Or must these knees, which never bow'd before,
Thus bend to thee and grovel in the dust ? (*kneels.*)

Alm. Death, death approach and free me from
this torture !

O Isidor ! hast thou no mercy left ?
Rise, rise in pity !—wretched that I am
To make all wretched that I chance to love !

By all I feel allow me one short respite,
 But spare me till to-morrow, and Luceria—
 Till then I swear—till then—shall not be mine !

Bern. So far I yield ; but on condition only
 That thou again this night wilt let me see thee :
 Among the cloisters in the northern aisle,
 An hour past midnight, be prepar'd to find me ;
 Then only say, My honour's yet my own,
 And let me go unblushing to my grave.
 Adieu ! conventual duties call me hence :
 We soon shall meet again. Look to thy heart,
 If it sustain the proof, I'm thine for ever ;
 Hate thee, I never can ; but if thou fail'st,
 The scorn of Isidor becomes thy due. [Exit.

Alm. He's gone, and would my griefs had with
 him fled !
 But with invet'rate rigour, Parthian-like,
 Flying, he leaves an arrow in my heart.
 Oh ! fatal promise which I perjurd gave
 E'en while my bleeding heart refus'd assent !
 Teach me, O heav'n ! impow'r me to fulfil it—

(*Enter Luceria, Agnes and Priest.*)

Ah ! art thou here ? Almanzor's better Genius,
 Come just as he was sinking in despair
 To lead him back to bliss ? behold the way.

(*points to the altar.*)

Luc. Say, is it not a cruel thought, Almanzor,
 That while thy gen'rous love receives me, thus
 Impoverish'd and enslav'd, to be thy bride,

I offer nothing to requite it? nothing
 Can poor Luceria do for thee, save only
 To give thee her misfortunes and to love thee.

Alm. Yet, yet, I can renounce her! Cease to love
 me,

For thy own sake, Luceria, cease to love me!

Luc. Alas! Almanzor! selfish as it is,
 I fear that e'en for thine I could not do so;
 Yet I can bear to lose thee; yes, though heav'n
 Bade me be thine, tho' now the priest's in waiting,
 Sooner than thou shouldst share my slightest sorrow,
 I could resign thee, and be thankful too.

Alm. Oh! were she less perfection she had sav'd
 me.

Nothing! no, nothing ever shall divide us!
 Look down, ye ruling angels from your sphere,
 And crown with ev'ry good your semblance here.
 Let nought but peace, save love, possess her mind;
 And let her prove, what nature sure design'd,
 The happiest as the fairest of her kind. }
 Tho' night's dark shades prevail, affection's pow'r
 Can change the darkest to the brightest hour.
 Then come, my fair, when I'm possess'd of thee,
 I ask not heav'n to waste one gift on me;
 Since here's my richest treasure by my side,
 My life, my love, my blessing, and my bride.

(*He leads her to the altar, and the scene closes.*)

ACT III.

SCENE—*A Chamber. Luceria and Agnes discovered.*

Luceria.

'Tis past—the dread deciding hour is past!
 I have bestow'd my faith. And now 'tis done,
 I'm less at ease than ever. Oh, my friend!
 Were ever nuptial rites conjoin'd like mine?
 No hallow'd choir adjur'd the list'ning saints;
 No tender parent gave my trembling hand,
 And with endearing aid sustain'd my spirits.
 I had no guidance but my easy heart;
 And at dead night, no female train attendant,
 Crept to the altar, and all shud'ring pledg'd
 In shameful secresy my stolen vows,
 Alas! how strange my lot, that I should mourn
 To be Almanzor's wife! Heav'n, 'twas thy will!
 Forgive me if, when I obey'd, I trembled:
 Yet once I thought Almanzor trembled too;
 Ah me! should he repent—

Agnes.

Dear madam, check

This too unguarded speech; some one approaches—

Luc. It is Rodolpho, Agnes! 'tis Rodolpho!

Enter Rodolpho.

Rod. Yes, 'tis he!

And does he cause these symptoms of dismay?

What new mistrust, or grief, divine Luceria,
Thus makes you turn affrighted from my view ?

Luc. Oh ! gracious heav'n, redress my wretched
state !

Thou sent'st me this sad fortune ; thou alone
Canst tell how sad it is. My father, too—
'Twill soon be vain indeed to weep for him !
While he, the author of so many sorrows,
Chides my affright and wonders at my tears.

Rod. Hence with complaint for ever ! Thou'rt
the tyrant

Whose magic sway has laid Rodolpho low ;
This heart of temper'd rock has felt thy pow'r,
By female beauty never touch'd till now.

Luceria. (*aside.*) What must I dread ? what
means he ?

Rod. Thine are charms
Worlds might contend for, but contend in vain ;
I swear, should thousands throng to snatch thee
from me,

In spite of earth and heav'n, I'd force my way
Thro' all that's horrible ! thro' blood, thro' murder,
Thro' sacrilege ! if needful thus to gain thee,
Thus seize my beauteous conquest !

Luc. Mercy shield me !

Rod. Yield not to idle fears ; I am no savage ;
Though rude my love, 'tis worthy of its object.
Thy hand, Luceria : there's no time for trifling ;
Remember Leon and thy sire enslav'd ;
Become my bride, and both are free !

Luc.

Thy bride?

No—death shall claim me first, and I'll be his.

(falls into Agnes' arms.)

'Rod. Ha! wake, Luceria, or my reason leaves me;
But no, the storm has only crush'd the flow'r,
Not rent it from the stalk. Again appears
The flushing hue of life; again those eyes
Shall smile with milder beams upon Rodolpho.

Luc. Who spoke that hated name? Alas! my lord,
If ever pity to your soul was known—
You say you love, and pity sure must dwell
Where love is harbour'd—Oh, by all that's human,
Save, save me from a doom so black as this!
You shall know all—know what a wretch you'd
make me;

My heart alone would fly you, but my hand—

Rod. Is destin'd to my rebel son, Almanzor?
Think, scornful girl, thou hast a father too!
Now view th' alternative thy fate presents thee,
Rodolpho's hand—or else Antonio's blood!

Luc. More horror! more distraction! Oh, Ro-
dolpho!

Behold a harmless, unoffending creature,
Who ne'er yet caus'd one human heart to mourn,
Now forc'd to supplicate for human mercy.
Didst thou but know what secret seals these lips—
Didst thou but know what vow these lips have made,
Oh! must I then betray thee, my Almanzor? *(aside.)*
Know then, Antonio's miserable daughter *(to Rod.)*
Shall perish on her murder'd father's tomb. *(rises.)*

Rod. No, ingrate ! live to mourn !
 To envy ev'ry other wretch's fate,
 To be the prey of universal scorn,
 Till Leon's princess and Antonio's daughter
 Are lost in trait'ress and in parricide.
 Now make thy way to thy Almanzor's arms,
 And share your portions ! his a father's curse,
 And thine a country's !—but take heed that there
 Death step not in and crush you both at once.

[*Exit.*

Luc. O death ! how willingly would I receive
 thee !

Yes, the cold fearful dwelling of the grave,
 Hath peace and shelter in its darksome bosom
 Which no Rodolpho e'er can violate.
 Then fear not to descend, thou child of woe,
 But pray, that where thy grief thus throws thee
 prostrate,
 The op'ning earth may now afford thee rest,
 And heav'n hereafter, restitution !

Agnes. Spare her, kind Pow'rs, or end at once her
 misery !

Enter Almanzor.

Alm. Where is she ? where's the charmer of my
 soul ?

Where art thou, my Luceria ? Lo ! I come
 To look my cares away, if aught of care
 He can possess who is possest of thee.—
 Ha ! is this she ! pale, drooping, lost in sorrow ?
 Lucerià, look upon me ! let me raise thee—

Luc. He comes! he comes to perish by my cause!
Approach me not, but fly me! Agnes, friend,
Oh! hide me, tear me from him!

Alm. Mighty heav'n!
Sure 'tis some dark illusion! Thou, Luceria,
Thou who hast seen me, each fresh moment seen me,
Bereft of almost ev'ry earthly blessing,
Wilt thou now tear thyself, the last, away?
Oh! suffer me to know the grief thou knowest,
To soothe, to share it, to engross it all!
Then by our love so recently confirm'd—

Luc. Unhappy prince! what say'st thou? by our
love?

That love! that fatal love which has undone thee!

Alm. What myst'ry strange——

Luc. Almanzor, couldst thou hate me

Alm. Hate thee! this, to one who loves as I do!

Luc. Say, shouldst thou find in me thy peace's
murderer,

Should I attract on thee thy father's curse,
Should I conduct thee to the gulph of death,
Say, would'st thou scorn my tears and sad remorse,
And coolly let me break my heart with anguish?
Or wouldst thou pity my still heavier doom,
And ne'er attempt to curse thy poor Luceria?

Alm. No more; but free of sorrow raise thy eyes,
And while I hold thee to this faithful heart,
(Attest it all ye Pow'rs of constancy)
I swear the heaviest evil were bereft
Of half its sorrows if it came from thee,

Luc. Almanzor ! Oh ! most gen'rous and most dear !—

And this is he whom I have doom'd to ruin !
 Forbear, thou cruel and unjust Rodolpho,
 Assail him not ! if 'tis his crime to love me,
 Wilt thou condemn the crime yet spare its author ?
 Hast thou for me no vengeance ? hast thou, heav'n,
 For me no pity ? Send me ev'ry evil,
 All I'll endure—Endure ? I'll thank thee for them !
 But force me not to lead him to destruction,
 Nor by the vow thou didst enjoin me take,
 Paid by a father's blood !

Alm. I'm lost—distracted
 Midst fear and horror—those last words, what meant
 they ?

Luc. Fain would I keep the dreadful tale untold ;
 The torture would be slighter while I knew
 That I alone endur'd it ; but thy safety,
 Thy life, Almanzor—and not thine alone—
 There, there's the cruel conflict ! thou or he—
 Oh ! all ye Pow'rs divine ! preserve and bless them !

[*Exit with Agnes.*

Alm. Stay, check thy flight !—

Enter Fernando.

Fernando, if thou know'st—
 Tell me, while horror yet permits me hear—

Fern. Alas ! my lord, the king, your father—

Alm. Speak !

Fern. Know then, (deceit were vain) he loves
 your bride,

And fain would make her his ; else must her eyes
Be doom'd to see a much-lov'd parent's death.

Alm. Now, Destiny, thy cruel work's complete,
And thou mayst rest for ever ! Come, despair !
Come, mis'ry ! madness ! all ye rueful train !
Leave yonder pure and guiltless being free,
And let the curst Almanzor be your prey.
Yes, I've undone her ! with detested fraud
I led the lovely unsuspecting maid
To plight to me her faith ; the time is near
When thou, dear victim of deceit, shalt plead
'That plighted faith unheard or unbeliev'd.
And shall such horror be ? No, I will fly,
Disclose it all at full ; sure, e'en Rodolpho
Must fear to break the tie which now unites us.
First, let me make, O heav'n ! my peace with thee,
And last appeal for pardon. Then to Rodolpho.

[*Exit. Fernando follows.*

SCENE—*An Aisle of a Cloister, with the statue of St. Marco ; Luceria discovered leaning on the pedestal. After a pause, Almanzor and Fernando cross the stage.*

Luc. Alanzor !—stop !

Alm. Who aims to stop a wretch
Prest by his crimes t' appease insulted justice?
By heav'n, 'tis she! she whom my crime has injur'd!
Luc. Oh! fly not in thy turn, my lov'd Almanzor;

'Tis thy Luceria, 'tis Antonio's daughter ;
No more that weak, that wretched thing, she left thee,
Late overwhelm'd with woes till then unknown,
I fill'd thy gen'rous bosom with distraction,
And then, (alas! if blushing could atone—)
Unfeeling shunn'd, and fled the grief I caus'd:
In wild distress I fled, unknowing where,
Till chance, or instinct, or recover'd reason,
Impell'd my footsteps here. With many a prayer,
And many a promise pledg'd of quick return,
I gain'd on Carlos to allow me pass.

'Twas then, with prostrate heart and streaming eyes
I call'd on a divine, an endless Sovereign,
A Friend, and Father! To this threefold Pow'r
I sued for equity, for aid, for comfort ;
I told my sorrows, and forgot them telling ;
Implor'd for succour in them, and imploring
Ador'd their giver ; and t' enhance the pray'r
Us'd thy dear name, the worthiest sure of all,
(Oh ! tremble not, my love) in that blest eye ;
The surest passport to celestial favour :
Nor did the adjuration prove in vain !

Immortal goodness dried his daughter's tears,
Rais'd her from earth, and told her raptur'd soul
" I who am virtue's friend, will be Almanzor's,"

Alm. Too keen this torture ! Heav'n, thou'st
well repaid me !

The blackest curse exhal'd from Malice' lips
Is felt not half so heavy as the blessing
Breathed by injur'd innocence,

Luc.

'Tis the last time—

'Tis the last time that we must ever meet ;

Give then, oh give me one more hour of comfort
Ere all depart for ever !—Your friend, meanwhile,
Shall watch t' avert approaching danger from us.

Fernando. (aside.) Curse on this sudden meeting!
else the prince,

In honour's madness, had reveal'd their union,
And then Rodolpho's rage had done the rest. [*Exit.*

Alm. See! where the fair, the gentle sufferer stands,
Unconscious of her wrongs ; while midst the tears
Which filial apprehension bids to flow,
Those speaking eyes pronounce the silent prayer,
Utter'd, perhaps, for him on whose account
She mourns a father's danger.

Luc.

I could weep

For ever, when I look on thee, Almanzor ;—
Alas ! that each should cause the other's woe ;
For thee my father dies, and thou for me ;
Each might upbraid, but fond forgiving love,
With swifter force than ever, thus enfolds us.

Alm. Thou pure and faithful soul, too uncongenial
With his who yet adores thee ! O Antonio !
Most just of men ! when thou at parting gav'st
Thy cherish'd daughter to my honour's care,
To what a serpent's trust didst thou confide her !
Think of thy sire, Luceria, of his virtues,
And of his fate assign'd ; then think of me,
The cause—And yet thy hate will full avenge him.

Luc. Almanzor ! dear Almanzor ! I'm too conscious
Thou know'st the reason of my late despair.

Alm. I do ;—pursue not the detested theme !
But I'll assault immortals to defend thee,
And Nature's self forgetting—

Luc. Tempt not such horrors ! let me not survive
To see thy fall, and thy insulted corpse
Become the contract of thy father's love.
E'en should thy friends, indignant at thy wrongs,
First make Rodolpho perish—Ah, Almanzor !
As yet, thou know'st not what a father is.
Though Nature blushes at her work in thine,
Tho' thy own heart disown, tho' heav'n reject him,
Yet, when thou seest the author of thy being,
Him whom fond nature taught thee first to love ;
Him when thou seest in dreadful pangs expire,
(A sight, perhaps, which I'm condemn'd to see)
Like me, I know thou wouldst dissolve in fondness,
Like me lament, like me give worlds to save him !

Alm. Sure Truth has quitted her ethereal seat
To dwell upon thy lips. Luceria, speak
Almanzor's fate ! more calm, more fix'd, he'll hear
thee

Than ever votary heard his saint's injunctions.
Now—by her voice, the organ of her tenderness,
(*aside.*)

Declare, wrong'd heav'n, thy judgment and my doom.

Luc. 'Tis not enough to hear, thou must obey me ;
To save thy life, Luceria, thy Luceria—
(Think me not less resolv'd because in tears)
Conjures thee to abandon, to forget her ;
She too, to save her sire, alas ! I know not

For which I'd suffer most, if forc'd to shun thee;
To swear, is by the tyrant king requir'd,
(Forgive the filial fraud, ye Pow'rs of mercy)
Ne'er to accept thy hand. Ah! let thy sorrow
Shake not my courage, nor refuse to part.

Alm. To part? to 'scape from death by what is
worse?

O thou, too sanguine in thy virtue, tell me,
Tell me, if aught could look on thee and leave thee?
Who that has seen those eyes could quit their view,
And leave them to consuming tears a prey?
Who from that voice could fly, and let it breathe
Its sad complaints unanswer'd and alone?
Who that had ever prov'd that heart's affection,
Could leave it thus to bleed by ev'ry shaft
Aim'd by relentless fate? E'en could I be
That wretch, that coward, what wouldst thou be-
come,

Poor solitary sufferer? how endure
The threats and insults of my tyrant father?

Luc. I can endure them; timid as I am,
There is a spring of courage in my breast,
The child of tenderness, which, while I love thee,
Tells me to suffer for thee. Oh, Almanzor!
Short and unhappy as our loves have been,
They ever were most tender and most pure.
Here shall the dear remembrance live for ever;
As thine, I'll brave th' attacks of woe for thee,
But as Antonio's daughter, weep for him:
Yet, let me weep alone! Go, dear Almanzor,

Go, heed not parting—when thou once art safe,
 These streaming eyes shall sooner cease to flow,
 And the poor anxious flutt'rer here shall rest ;
 Go, and when absent, for Luceria's sake,
 Implore heav'n's goodness for Luceria's father.

Alm. Thou best—thou ill-starr'd angel ! Yes, I'll
 go—

Fly from the bitter scorn, the deep reproach,
 Thou soon wilt breathe, alas ! too justly on me !

Luc. Is such thy thought—thy thought of me,
 Almanzor ?

(She throws herself at the feet of St. Marco.)

Saint ! blessed saint ! who mad'st me what I am !
 Who thought'st me worthy of Almanzor's hand !
 Warm from my heart receive these thanks of grati-
 tude,

And bear them to the highest arch of heav'n !
 Thus, let me prostrate kiss thy sacred feet,
 Thus with my tears bedew the honour'd spot
 Where fell the scroll that made me his. If e'er
 I lay the slightest of my woes to him,
 Break then those ties thy will divine had form'd,
 And seal my first complaining by his loss !

Alm. Oh ! rise, and cease—it chills my blood to
 hear thee !

Luc. And art thou, cruel, in such haste to part ?
 Alas ! I'll not complain ! 'tis fit thou fly'st
 From her who draws a father's vengeance on thee,
 Then forces thee, disgrac'd, to fly thy country.—
 Oh ! yet forgive me, bless me while thou canst !

Alm. This dost thou merit—this require from me!
 'Tis time that thou shouldst know me—Thou art mine
 By most perfidious means. The mystic order
 Which thou, deluded, thought'st was heaven's com-
 mand—

Luc. Cease there ; I'll hear no more.

Alm. It was a forgery.
 Nay, hear the rest at once ; I first discover'd,
 Then gave assent, deceiv'd thee, and espous'd thee !
 —Lo ! pale surprise extends o'er all her features ;
 Oh, might the change stop there ! But no, for see,
 The living tokens of regret appear,
 And love for ever from the picture's fled.

Luc. And also from my soul love, peace, and thou !
 Yes, once I lov'd thee ; hadst thou been encompass'd
 By ev'ry human ill which others shun,
 I should have lov'd thee more, have borne with pride
 Whatever grief assail'd me, since I bore it
 On thy account ; e'en hadst thou been unkind
 I had not hated thee, but when unworthy—

Alm. Oh, turn away, upbraid, but hate me not !

Luc. Alas ! alas ! my country ! thou must wear
 Thy chains for ever now ; I cannot free thee !
 My father, thou must die ! I cannot save thee !
 Die—leave thy wretched daughter doom'd to bear
 A tyrant's rage, a people's execration ;
 And all thro' thee (to Almanzor) ; teach, gracious
 heav'n, this heart

Which has renounc'd him, teach it to abhor him !

Alm. Enough ! complain no more : I'll to Rodolpho.

Declare our lot, and fall thy anger's victim.

Farewel !

(going.)

Luc. And make me still more curst than ever ?
Your father's ignorance of the tie that binds us
Is all that keeps Antonio's life secure ;
That known, he's lost ! where'er I turn I'm wretched ;
For ever leave me, thou who mad'st me so !

Alm. Thou art obey'd. Adieu, Luceria, then ;
Adieu ! most fair, most cruel, most belov'd !
Yet, since 'tis our last meeting—That dear hand
Which late upon the altar I receiv'd,
Is it a crime to press it once again ?
Is it a crime thus ardently t' enfold
That lovely form I ne'er must gaze on more ?

Luc. Oh, fly Almanzor now, or stay for ever !
Return'd, or rather never-absent love
Absorbs my senses—Didst thou not deceive me ?
And hark ! methinks my father's spirit cries,
Embrace not him who sent me to the grave !
Fly, fly ill-omen'd youth !

Alm. What ! so relentless ?
Sure thou might'st pardon tho' thou love no longer,

Luc. I pardon, and no more. Alas, Almanzor !
How wretched is our lot, how hopeless !—No,
There's yet one solace, one resource at hand,
Which none but thou can give. In happier days,
When I delighted mark'd thy ev'ry word,
Thou once mad'st mention of a distant war
Where by thy sword the Moorish gen'ral fell.

Alm. Yes ; would to heav'n that I had fell by his !

Luc. Among the spoil, thy hand victorious seiz'd
A dagger of rich work thou bor'st away,
And ever since hast worn. If e'er thou hop'st
I can forgive, if e'er thou claim'st from me
Aught of affection—I demand that dagger!

Alm. Eternal Pow'r of heav'n, what's this I hear!
Too well I understand thee. Oh, Luceria!
How could a mild and tender soul like thine
Conceive a deed so horrid? What! not only
Design a fatal blow against thy life,
But force Almanzor's hand to guide it for thee!
Yes, fair barbarian, he will guide it thus!

(Offers to stab himself.)

Luc. Forbear! forbear! and hear me ere too late.
I know it is a rash, a desp'rate deed,
Forbid by female softness, more forbid
By Christian faith; but when my mind revolves
To that dread period when Redolpho, weary
Of long delay, prepares the trying scene,
Shews me my father on the verge of death,
And tells me what I dare not do to save him;
When Leon's children with indignant cries
Exclaim, is it so hard to save a father?
Almanzor, oh, preserve me from such suff'rings!
I am not desp'rate yet, 'tis all I ask
To keep it in reserve. If thou deny'st me,
When at the last I sink beneath my woes,
My latest breath shall lay them all to thee.

Alm. Oh! thou wilt rend my heart in twain.
There, take

The first and last bequest of hapless love:—
 Ne'er may'st thou need to use the hapless gift,
 Nor know the giver's pangs !

Luc. (aside.) Lie here, blest steel ;

I soon shall have thee nearer. *(puts it up.)*

Alm. (clock strikes one.) Ah ! killing sound ! what
 dread remembrance bring'st thou !

Enter Bernardo.

'Tis he ! he comes ! he's present !

Bern. (after a pause.) Not a word, my son ?

Alm. Oh, Isidor ! destroy—but look not on me !

Bern. (seeing Luceria.) Leave me, O sight ! Ye
 pow'rs of sense, forsake me !

Speak ! art thou perjur'd, wedded ?—Aim, just heav'n,
 Thy thunder straight, and let it fall—on me !

Crush these grey hairs, which thou, I trust, hast ne'er
 Repented thou hast let me wear so long !

Rend this true heart, which never has dishonour'd
 thee,

Since these ill-fated eyes have liv'd to see
 Their God dishonour'd by the dearest object
 Their aged orbs e'er gaz'd on !

Luc. Alas ! thou rev'rend man, whom yet I know
 not—

Bern. Hence ! leave me, fair seducer, baneful
 beauty,

Who hast led my dear, my noble prince, astray !
 Oh ! he was once all faith, all truth, all honour !—
 Yet, yet I have a soul—that soul has vengeance !

And here I'll wreak. Pardon, sweetest innocence !
Lov'st thou Almanzor ? Say ?

Luc. Most dear ! most truly !

Bern. Then ever shall this aged heart love thee !
Come, deign to let an old man's arms enfold thee ;
A blessing on those tears ! fall they for him ?

(*pointing to Almanzor.*)

Age cannot weep, but it can feel like youth—
Almanzor, thou hast cleft my heart in twain,
But it shall ne'er forget to hold thee dear ;
Yes, to the last shall beat—shall—shall—

Alm. O Isidor, more cruel than my father,
Adieu ! this lov'd, this last bequest, oh, cherish it !

(*gives him Luceria.*)

Farewell, farewell, my ever-dear Luceria !

Take this : when I am gone, it yet may serve thee.

(*gives her the scroll.*) [Exit.

Luc. Oh ! plead, good father, plead for blessings
on him !

I have not voice to frame one.

Bern.

Ha ! what paper
Attracts my eyes ? The impious scroll, O Marco,
Forg'd in thy name ! to atoms ! perish ! vanish !

(*tears and disperses it.*)

Thank, thank thee heav'n ! This arm, which oft thy
pow'r

Has nerv'd with vigour in my country's cause,
Behold it us'd, O glorious task, in thine !

Luc. Rash, rash and cruel ! hold—'tis gone—
destroy'd !—

Dear, dear Almanzor, I've for ever lost thee !
This breaking heart forbodes it ; as his hand
Has torn the bond of our united fates,
So will the hand of death tear thee from me ;
Reserve it, heav'n ! and let Luceria die !

Enter Carlos.

Car. Alas ! he's gone ! that dear ill-fated prince,
Too good, too noble for Rodolpho's son—

Luc. Ah ! who ? Almanzor ?

Car. ————— My beloved master !

I ne'er shall see him more ! for ever banish'd—
E'en now I met him, as that villain, Conrad,
Declar'd the king's command that the next sun
Should see his absence, or Antonio's death ;
(Excuse me, madam, what referr'd to you.)
Oh ! had you heard him, with unshaken voice
Exclaim, Antonio then may live for ever !
And she my soul adores shall cease to curse me !
Then turning him to me—well, they who mourn
To lose him, sure are nothing more than human ;
But they who could on terms of strife have parted—
May heav'n have mercy on their iron souls !

Luc. Ah ! none I claim, none hope for—none
deserve.

Car. He turn'd to me, he prest my hand, and said,
Farewell, my faithful Carlos, and preserve
Thy master's mem'ry. Tell my lov'd Luceria,
The same resource I left with her e'en now
I mean this night to prove, and be at peace.

(Bernardo starts, and rushes out.)

Luc. Where now is all resentment? O Almanzor!

(*faints.*)

Car. Help! help! within there!

Enter Agnes.

Luc. Almanzor! come, my arms are open to thee;
Oh, late repenting, late forgiving wretch!
He's gone! he's fled, for ever from thy pow'r!
Nor can remorse or pardon reach him now.

Car. What mean you, madam? he is scarce departed;

I'll instant to the rampart—

Luc.

Carlos, stay!

'Tis I must, pleading, hang upon his knees,

'Tis I must fasten on his desp'rate arm,

'Tis I must dash the fatal sword to earth,

Or share its deadly point. For life, for mercy,

O lead me to him! let me save my lord!

I am your pris'ner, true! but—I'm his wife!

Car. This is the way; we may o'ertake him yet.

Luc. Lead on; thro' darkness, danger, death, I'll follow thee!

Thou, Agnes, come, to join my thanks to heav'n,
Or close my eyes beside my poor Almanzor.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE—*The Rampart. Dark. Enter Fernando and Conrad.*

Fern. 'Tis well—he hastes apace to meet his fate;
Th' assassins, said you, Conrad, are prepar'd?

Con. Ere long their swords will give Almanzor welcome.

Fern. Speak not his name again ! Oh ! what is murder ?

And what is conscience ?

Con. And the crown, what is it ?

Fern. Again I am resolv'd ; but seek your post.

Who comes this way ? [*Exit* Conrad.

Enter Rodolpho, *his sword drawn.*

Rod. Fernando, is it you ?

There's murder on the watch ; just now while passing
The western rampart, two assassins furious
Rush'd on me.

Fern. (*aside.*) Curse on the mistaken ruffians !

Rod. One fell by me, the other by my guard ;
The villain who died last, struck penitent,
Exclaim'd, our instigator yet survives,
You'll find him—There he stammer'd and expir'd.
Thus am I left uncertain of my foe ;
I know thy valour, and thy truth Fernando,
And charge thee, on thy life, to find the traitor.

Fern. My liege, you judge me well. I'm now
entangled

E'en in the toils I spread. (*aside.*)

Rod. 'Tis plain, at least,
The wretch I seek should now be ling'ring near !
But see ! a less'ning shadow moves this way—
Who comes thus slowly forward ? This is he,
Th' assassin, I'm convinced !

Fern. Now is the crisis ! I'll retire and watch it.

[*Exit.*

Alm. (*entering.*) How long shall I continue to endure

The weight of my despair? To part for ever!

First let me—who observes me there? who art thou?

Rod. Thus, traitor! thus Rodolpho answers thee!

(*stabs him.*)

Alm. Almighty pow'rs! Rodolpho!

Rod. Yes, 'tis Rodolpho who hath laid thee low;

And yet, methinks, 'twas vile to stain my sword

With blood so base as thine. Die, villain die!

Nor peace in death, nor rest hereafter know!

[*Exit.*]

Alm. Is this my fate? a traitor's! an assassin's!

To die, I mourn it not—but thus to die!

Oh! father! father! I had thank'd the blow

Had it been giv'n by any hand but thine.—

And must the tomb receive me thus accurst?

Return, return, and strike the blow again,

Yes, strike it deeper—but recall thy curse!

—Oh! for a moment's life!—Thou com'st—thou'rt
near!

'Tis all in vain—Ah! wretched he who ends

A life of sorrow by a lonely death,

And no one near to tell him Peace be with thee!

Thus have I liv'd, and thus I now must die!

Yet thou hast mercy, heav'n! and to that mercy—

Luceria!—poor Luceria!—

Enter Fernando.

Fern. E'en now Rodolpho pass'd me, and exulting
Said, he had slain th' assassin. Now to find

On whom his fury fell.—

O nameless crime ! O unexampled horror !

The father's hand has massacred the son !

And I'm the author of this parricide !

Dost thou not tremble, Nature ? canst thou, heav'n,

Behold the crime, yet rest on thy foundations ?—

Is this Almanzor, then ? so chang'd already !

Where's now, alas ! the more than mortal air ?

Where now that sweetly animated mien,

Where youth and valour spread their glowing tints ?

Lost in this livid hue, defac'd with blood !

Ye pale cold relics of the noblest soul

That e'er attracted love or envy—thus,

Behold e'en him who caus'd thy present doom,

Embrace with warmest clasp that form he hated,

And kiss those wounds he made.

Alm.

Whoe'er thou art,

Release me from thy hold, and let me die.

Fern. He lives !—he lives !

Alm. Fernando ! is it you ? my friend, my brother !

Ah ! why recall—yet no ; this parting soul

So long, so truly lov'd thee while on earth,

'Twas fit it should return at thy command.

Fern. Oh ! suff'ring, which all else transcends !

Almanzor,

Believe Fernando envies, while he mourns thee !

Alm. May the sad fate of thy unhappy friend

Be all the grief that he shall ever cause thee !

Yet should thy constant faith, thy boundless love,

To me, have prov'd thy ruin ! If they have,

Alas! forgive my mem'ry! And may heav'n,
Who knows thy virtues, be that friend to thee
Which thou wert to Almanzor!

Fern. Heav'n who is just
Will hear the pray'r! Curse! curse the impious
hand—

Alm. Remember me, deplore, but ne'er avenge me!
And if some future day it prove thy lot
To clear my fame to a misguided father,
If then his cold and callous heart should give
One sigh of pity to a murder'd son,
Place my Luceria in that pity's view,
And let its influence be directed there.
Oh! I can part with life, but not with her!
Faint, dying, I conjure thee to protect her;
Assuage her woes, and trust, for ev'ry tear
Thy friendship shall efface, Almanzor's shade
Sends thee a thousand blessings. Ah! these pangs
Are those of death—once more—remember—

Fern. He's gone! that precious breath is stopp'd
for ever.

Luceria! come, avenge thy murder'd lord,
And Isidor arise in Heav'n's own cause!
Tear wide the crimson curtains of my heart,
And waveth' Almighty's sword which slays the soul!
They come! stand off, dread forms! what here I feel
Would mock Tartarean pangs. Again upon me?
No help? no mercy?—

[*Rushes out.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE—*The Hall. Enter Fernando and Conrad.*

Conrad.

NO, 'tis some vision of deluded fancy

Which now assumes thy lineament, or else
Thou art not he who wert some hours before
The brave, undaunted, resolute Fernando.

Now, on my soul it was a noble effort ;
When he who stood between the throne and thee
At length was slain and bleeding at thy feet,

Thou couldst not bear so terrible a sight,
But, like a young unpractis'd villain, fled'st !

Fern. O Conrad ! Conrad ! minds like thine are
wont

To look for mirth in misery itself.

'Tis true, I plann'd the dark, the murd'rous scheme ;
But when it took such horrible effect,

When the deceiv'd, unhappy, gen'rous prince,
Expiring, bless'd the friendship of Fernando,
And breath'd his last in his destroyer's arms—

Ah ! if a day of retribution come,

When every good and ev'ry ill's reveal'd,
And secrets issue from the lips of death,

The murder'd youth shall burst upon my sight,
And pointing to his wound, exclaim, Thou gav'st it !
Think, Conrad, think upon that hour and tremble !

Con. In truth, Fernando, thou art fit to go
And weep in concert with the widow'd fair.

Fern. Well, rail no more ; the penitent emotions
Which late assail'd me are too soon dispell'd.
Fain would I have the action past, undone :
But yet I do not shrink at doing more ;
Since guilt and prudence now appear the same.

Con. Act like thyself, and there's no need of prudence.

Fern. Perhaps there's now too much. The crimson'd rampart

Yet bears the ensigns of Almanzor's murder ;
But for the slain himself, some hand divine
Has sure convey'd him thence. This morn, thou
know'st,

Affrighted conscience chas'd me from the spot
But when with cooler temper I return'd,
And look'd around, in vain I sought the corse
O'er which I late had shed contrition's tear.
I know not whom the secret rests with now ;
But when 'tis told, adieu to all my hopes !

Con. If 'tis reveal'd, the more successful thou ;
Rodolpho slew Almanzor ! Will not this
Make all Castile demand his forfeit life ?
Then who so fit to fill the vacant throne,
As thou, their much-lov'd prince's dearest friend ?

Fern. There, there, I fail for ever ! Oh ! curst folly
That I neglected, when the deed was done,
To seize the scroll, the order for their nuptials.
This and the paper which the priest had sign'd,

Almanzor then possess'd. The fond Castilians,
 Still idolisers of their master's mem'ry,
 Will they not hasten to elect his widow ?
 How shall we stop this evil ?

Con.

But one way :

There must be no Luceria to elect.
 You know she flies Rodolpho's hated love :
 'Tis easy to incense him : frame a tale
 Of some conspiracy, some plot against him.
 Beneath this palace, to a vast extent,
 Unnumber'd pathless vaults and dungeons lie ;
 To their dark confines were she once remov'd,
 A fitting hour, concealment, and a dagger—

Fern. O horror ! horror ! must it come to this ?
 What ! shed more guiltless blood ? Alas, poor victim !
 Ambition's ruthless soul hath will'd thy doom !

Con. Go, then, seek her whom you so much deplore,
 And, kneeling, hail her as your future queen.

Fern. Curse on the sound ! Well, Conrad, she
 shall die ;

That is, be dead to light and to the world.
 Now mark me—Ere nocturnal shades descend,
 She must be station'd in her living tomb :
 And when at length Rodolpho's fallen,
 And I am fix'd as sov'reign of Castile,
 Then may some convent, to my int'rest won,
 Hide, in eternal gloom, this dreaded object.
 —So now the vessel's launch'd, the port in view,
 But one small streight remains to traverse o'er,
 And then—I would the interval were past !

Until I'm seated on Castilia's throne,
 Ne'er shall I know one ray of inward peace—
 Oh! shall I know it then? Conscience, thou'rt just.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE—Luceria's Apartment. *Enter Antonio and Carlos.*

Car. This way, my Lord; within you'll find the princess.

Ant. May ev'ry blessing which the heav'ns reserve
 For gen'rous men—but I'll not strive to thank thee;
 The inward feelings of an anxious father
 Would be profan'd by words.

Car. Alas! my Lord,
 Cheer but the hapless princess, and all's well. [*Exit.*]

Ant. Now to my child. Alas! since last I saw her,
 What pangs, what sorrows, may she not have known!
 Oh! fear, thou art the sister of affection!
 Luceria! come, Luceria!

(As he is going in, Luceria enters suddenly, her hair in disorder; and her robe stain'd with blood. Agnes follows.)

Luc. What ill-starr'd voice calls on that wretched name?
(*seeing Antonio.*)
 Whoe'er thou art that look'st so kind upon me,
 I feel a tender, a mysterious impulse
 Which tells me that I ought to kneel before thee.

Ant. Oh! my child!

Luc. Do I affright thee? True, these tints are terrible,
 But should this sight alone dismay thee thus?

Ah ! hadst thou only seen what late I saw !
 Hadst thou but seen that dear, that noble victim
 Stretch'd on the earth—pale, bleeding, void of life !
 Well might I pierce the air with frantic cries,
 Stamp on th' unconscious earth ! rend these frail locks,
 Now bathe his visage with unceasing tears,
 Now press his lifeless heart against my own :
 But all was useless ! the beloved spirit
 Already soar'd to its celestial seat,
 Was mourning for its desolate Luceria.
 Oh, had I been an angel of the sky,
 I had descended from my heav'n with joy,
 And flown on lightning's wings to staunch the precious blood !

Ant. Oh ! mis'ry ! death to hear her !—My Luceria !
 Has thy poor mind forgot a father's love ?
 A father's image ?

Luc. My father ! Ah ! kind heav'n
 Send him a happier fortune than his daughter !
 Forgot him ? No ! he ever was too kind,
 Too good for that ; he was indeed a parent—
 Almanzor ! Oh ! unfortunate Almanzor !

Ant. Now whither, whither turn these meaning
 eyes ?
 Oh ! my lost child ! give me one look, one glance !
 Cruel Almanzor ! this is all thy work—

Luc. Must your resentment e'en pursue his shade ?
 He may have wrong'd you—but he's now no more !

Ant. Said she, no more ? Alas ! thou noble youth,
 I have no tears for thee ! here hang my sorrows,

As once my hopes, those hopes now crush'd for ever.
 Yes, the fair star whose genial light I hop'd
 Would long have shone o'er Leon's prosp'rous realm,
 Is plung'd beneath the ocean of despair,
 And nought but its reflection now remains !

Luceria. Where was the heart that could design
 the mischief,

Or where the hand that could direct the blow ?
 None saw him, but admir'd ! none knew, but lov'd
 him !

I doubt sometimes, I who embrac'd his corpse !
 Ah ! is it he who now lies bleeding there ?
 How great ! how winning ! how adorned in death !
 Although I cannot make thee breathe again,
 Yet all I can, I'll share a mourner's right.
 Lo ! here's the veil I wore upon an hour—
 I know not when, but 'twas a happy hour !
 To thee, Almanzor, shall this veil be sacred !
 Yes, it shall serve to check this purple stream,
 Thus ! thus ! and thus ! (*tearing it.*)

Ant. Oh, what a trial's this !

Heav'n ! when thou mean'st to prove that men are men,
 Afflict them in their children !

Luc. See ! my hands fail ; my eyes are heavy too—
 'Tis now my turn to die ; farewell, Rodolpho,
 And all thy cruelties ; farewell too, Agnes ;
 And father, wheresoe'er thou art, farewell !
 Oh ! I am quiet now. (*lying down.*)

Ant. Spare, spare her, heav'n !
 Leave her distracted still, but let her live !

Agnes. Fear not, my lord ; the pressure of affliction

Has fallen on her with lethargic force,
Which may perhaps renew the springs of reason.
Sweet be that sleep, the first her grief has known !
Meanwhile the cause——

Ant. I care not for the cause !

I had a treasure which my soul was set on ;
That treasure's lost, at least no more possess.
—Sleep on, my child, and if thy fortune change
not—

Oh for the strength to say—Ne'er wake again !
Thy woful sire shall not meanwhile forget thee ;
Thus, by thy side, I'll pass the live-long hours,
And mark their bitter course with pray'rs for thee.
All-gracious heav'n !—but heav'n has ceas'd to hear
me :

When, when was it arraign'd by me before ?
Thou maniac's friend, thou dark, fell thing, impiety,
I thought thee once a phantom !—Let the saint
Pent in his cell, uncaring and uncared for,
Talk at his ease, and praise celestial justice ;
Mortals may weep ; then what should fathers do ?
Revenge their woes and die.—Rodolpho, tremble !
I've done with life, but thou shalt perish first !

(starting up.)

Oh, my lov'd child ! when I am gone, who'll guard
thee ?

Come, thou must with me.—Hence ! accurst idea !
What ! rush uncall'd on death ! and with me drag

My dear, my harmless child; and tell th' All-ruling,
'This child thou gav'st me, made me guilty towards
thee?

—Judge of mankind! to thee, and thee alone,
Repètant I commit our fates, but let them
('Tis all a father asks) let them be one !

Thou who hast suffer'd, teach me how to suffer ;
Thou who hast triumph'd, make me triumph too ;
Thou who once wept'st thyself, Oh pardon me !

Enter Carlos.

Car. My lord, I crave your pardon, but my duty—
'Twere too much hazard should you longer stay.

Ant. A father dares all hazard, or knows none.

Car. But should Rodolpho—

Ant. Let him come, and tell him
That I and death are here to give him welcome.

Car. Hence, sir, I pray you, hence ; it must be so.

Ant. Oh, Carlos! Carlos! 'tis my child I leave:
And has that name no magic but for me ?

'Twould not be much to linger near her prison ;
Then for thy late lov'd prince, Almanzor's sake ;
Almanzor ! who in life and death so lov'd her—

Car. Sure his dear spirit seconds you from heav'n !
Come then, my lord, and at your will return.

Ant. Adieu! my child, adieu! again, adieu!

[*Exit with Carlos.*

Luc. (awakening.) Stay! blessed vision, stay!
thou, Agnes, there?

Come near, my friend, I have not seen thee long.

Agnes. Unhop'd-for joy! she lives again to reason!

Luc. I do to woe. Alas! my lost Almanzor!

Yet let me for a while, dear shade, forget thee,
To tell the little comfort sent by heav'n.

Ere this, some moments, as I slumb'ring lay,
A dear, an honour'd form appear'd before me;
It bore the semblance of my sainted mother:
A while she gaz'd upon her widow'd child,
With looks which shew'd that grief in heav'n had
reach'd her,

And e'en the angel in the mother lost.

Full oft I sought to seize a dear embrace,
As oft, alas! the dear embrace deceiv'd me.

Hear me, she said, my daughter, mark the warning—
Thy mother gives thee. Thou hast suffer'd much,
And now must suffer more; yet trust to this,
When next thou wakest, thou shalt wake in happiness.

No more the precious spirit deign'd to say,
But vanish'd from my sight,—yet first imprest
My quivering lips with a celestial kiss,
And thrice the voice parental cried Adieu!

Agnes. A vision well decreed to calm your soul.

Luc. When next I wake, it will not be on earth
'Twill be from whence that blessed seraph came!
'Twill be where now my lov'd Almanzor is!
'Twill be where soon a father will rejoin me!
Ah! that beloved name has chill'd my faith,
And call'd the tears I thought no more to shed.

Enter Carlos.

Sure I have seen thee once. Ah! cruel mem'ry!
Was it not thou who led my luckless steps
To seek my murder'd lord?

Car. It was, indeed:

Ah, madam! over such a prince's ashes,
Years may pass on, and yet our tears be fresh.

Luc. No more! no more! my inmost soul is rent.
Ah, dear Almanzor! this poor subaltern,
He weeps thy fate, while I have been thy murd'rer!
I forc'd thee first to strike the fatal blow!

Car. You, madam! no, ascribe his death to others:
True he was slain, yet was his sword undrawn,
And, as I since remark'd, the blade unstained.

Luc. Be light, my heart, light of a crime at least,
But not of a misfortune; he is dead!
I'm not the cause, but still Almanzor's dead!
Oh! could Rodolpho—could that monster's hand—
No more of him: say, soldier, couldst thou leave
The dear remains on that unhallow'd spot?
The pride of princes, lovers, and of sons,
Wast thou, my love, yet little it avail'd thee!
Ill-starr'd alike as lover, prince, or son,
In life unhappy, and in death abandon'd.

Car. When, with my aid, your faithful follower
here

Had borne you, madam, senseless from the spot,
I measured back my steps to watch and weep
By him I would have died for; when I saw
An aged man, in holy vestments clad,

Mourning beside my prince, a saint in woe ;
 From time to time he made attempt to pray,
 But sorrow's force o'ercame devotion's efforts.
 I plac'd me by him, and we wept together,
 'Till we perceiv'd (else had we wept till morn)
 That life was not extinct.

Luc. Oh ! dost thou mock me ?
 Almanzor ! does he live ?

Car. No comfort there ;
 So happy were we then ! but not for long.
 The friar, more collected than myself,
 Soon pointed to my view the secret way
 Which, through the bastion, by a steep descent,
 Leads to the vaults extending here below ;
 Through those dark paths we bent our anxious steps,
 And safely thence our precious charge convey'd.
 Nor would I e'er have left my prince's side ;
 Save on condition to return at sun-rise.

Luc. And then !—say on— !

Car. I said there was no comfort.—
 With weeping eyes the friar gave me these ;
(*gives her papers.*)

Let them, he said, be to Luceria given ;
 Her lord expiring drew them from his breast,
 And thus, with his last words, enjoin'd it of me—
 Your pardon, princess, I've not heart to stay.

[*Exit.*

Luc. Heavens ! what is here ? The contract of
 our marriage !

Oh, my Almanzor ! didst thou to the last

Think of the wretched being who survives thee?
 What characters are these?—'Twas his dear hand
 Expiring trac'd them! (reads.)

“Thou for ever lov'd,
 Receive this precious bond which made me thine,
 Which ne'er has left this suffering heart till now,
 And the last object which these eyes shall gaze on.
 Reveal, I do conjure thee”—There, O there,
 Death snatched the pen away, and widow'd me.

Agnes. Take comfort now: sure when Rodolpho
 sees

'This proof that you are wedded——

Luc.

No, Agnes, no!

Death, and death only, shall divulge that secret;
 Think'st thou Rodolpho, madden'd with revenge,
 Would hesitate to shed my father's blood?
 No, his inhuman rage would need an object,
 And I will be that object! let me not
 Die cover'd with the blood of two who lov'd me.
 Long as I can, I'll bear the tyrant's offers;
 But when at length resistance will be vain,
 This, (*shewing the dagger*) do not start, shall free
 my trembling soul:

Then shall this writing clear my fame, and say
 That if I could, I would have sav'd a father;
 So should he yet be doom'd for me to bleed,
 I shall escape that pang and die before him.
 But if Rodolpho, by my death appeas'd,
 Should spare at length that lov'd and rev'rend head—
 Oh! transport then to thank in realms above,

My dear Almanzor's shade for this and this.

(*shewing the paper and dagger.*)

Enter Stephano.

Steph. You know me, madam? I'm your father's soldier.

Luc. My father! hast thou seen him? did he send thee?

Steph. No; as I learn, this day will seal his doom.
I'm privileg'd to speak—I've serv'd him long;
Say, are those tears, those agonies, sincere?
Can you deplore his death, yet let him die?
Think too of Leon, of your country think,
In slav'ry held by you!

Agnes. Yet are you silent?

Luc. Peace, gentlest friend, should I disclose the secret,

His hasty rage would spread it all around;
And then what artifice could save my father?
E'en were he not my sire, he's still my king;
Ah! woe to all who at that honour'd name
Are not inspir'd in its beloved cause,
Alike to dare to suffer or to die!

Steph. Oh, what a tale for future times to tell!
So good a king! so excellent a father!
To be condemn'd (hear, Nature) by his daughter!
Thou truly worthy of Almanzor's love,
(Almanzor, hear and blush at such a name)
Thou tender, constant-hearted parricide!

Luc. Thanks to thy words; I hope they've given me death—

And dar'st thou, wretch, revile so great a name

As that of my Almanzor? Dearest shade,
I could not save thee from the ruffian's blow,
But I'll defend thy ashes.

Steph. Is he then dead?

A traitor dead against a living father?

Luc. Cease, thou blasphemer, cease thy coward
malice!

'Tis well for thee my poor Almanzor lives not.

Steph. I've done;—go seek your father on the
scaffold,

And tell him, "Father, I would fain preserve you,
But that in truth too well I love Almanzor."

Luc. Oh! heart of marble, wilt thou never break?

O mother, warning mother! thy prediction
Is verified at full. My king, my father—
Must parricide be grav'd upon my tomb,
When for thy sake alone I've laid me there?

Steph. The parting blessing of unconquer'd fondness
Which the deluded king shall breathe upon thee,
E'en if it reaches heav'n, will fall again
Upon thy head—a curse.

Luc. Stop! stop and kill me! (*kneels.*)
Pity thy sov'reign's daughter! If I'm a parricide,
Give me my due (*throws him the dagger*); there!
take it! strike! avenge

My father and your king!

Steph. Thus I secure a vengeance. (*seizes it.*)

Agnes. O heav'n, appease him! let me fly for suc-
cour. [*Exit.*

Rod. (*without.*) You soldiers wait; Fernando, you
attend me.

Steph. Ha ! I'm undone : which way avoid his sight ?
 'This first presents— [*Exit into the inner apartment.*]

Luc. Bear up thou trembling spirit while thou canst.

Enter Rodolpho and Fernando.

Rod. Where is this proud, infatuated fair,
 This lovely rebel ?—All ye saints and angels,
 Grant that my eyes prove false ! Is it th' attractive,
 The beautiful Luceria, whom I see,
 Or some pale inmate of the fearful grave ?
 Yet say, what mean that look of wilder'd woe,
 Those locks dishevell'd, and that blood-stain'd vest ?
 Oh ! who could trace in these thy former self ?

Luc. Fear'st thou a poor defenceless captive's sight ?
 Heav'n knows I've much more cause to start at thine.

Rod. And is it really thou ? And have those hands
 Committed outrage on that tender form ?
 Oh ! I abhor myself ; those crimson spots
 Are daggers to my sight.

Luc. Vain, vain compassion,
 Yes, tyrant ! look and tremble at this blood,
 Which a whole ocean of repentant tears
 Can ne'er efface, nor ages wear away.
 Know'st thou the heart from which its vital source
 First sprang ? E'en that ! (*points to Rodolpho.*)
 Know'st thou who shed it ?—Thou !

Rod. Ambiguous all ! forget these darksome fancies,
 And thus, in his embraces who adores you—

Luc. Hence from me, man of blood ! 'Tis poor
 advantage
 That my Almanzor's gone. ! True, you could part us,

Could tear his living image from my eyes,
 But from my soul—thence tear him if you can !
 Simple and vain to think a little earth
 'Twixt him and me could prove so great a bar !
 No, the chill couch of dust where now he lies,
 Is the fair shrine where breathe my heart's best orisons,
 And he the guardian saint to whom I pay them.

Rod. Despair and fury ! yet the triumph's mine.
 Insulting maid ! can this heroic rage
 Recall the traitor ? No, he's distant far ;
 'Twas I who sever'd you ! Reproach, defy me,
 But still in vain ; 'tis done !

Luc. Just Providence,
 Have mercy on this monster ! none so need it.
 Oh ! thou dear lost delight of my existence,
 Whose gentle voice I hear this moment whisper
 Weep not, my love, if thou wouldst have the soul
 Of thy Almanzor rest. How, how obey thee ?

Rod. 'Tis well : remember yet, while I'm a tyrant,
 Thy father is a captive ! Has that word
 No terrors in its sound ? Thou know'st, Luceria,
 That when I laid my sceptre at thy feet,
 I told the horrid price of thy rejection ;—
 Prepare thee then, before the orb of day
 Has gone another round—

Luc. I am prepar'd
 For all that's horrible ; except the fate
 Of being thine.

Rod. Then see Antonio perish. (*going.*)

Luc. Oh, stay thee, curse me with thy sight for ever,

So thou renounce that deed ! I'll bless, I'll worship
thee ;

And kiss those hands imbru'd in blood so precious.
Thou who hast heap'd upon me ev'ry woe,
Save but the orphan's woes ! Spare, spare me them,
And though thy slave, I'll bless thee in my chains,
And e'en this widow'd bosom shall forgive thee.
Ah ! but for poor Almanzor's faith and valour,
'Thou ne'er had'st liv'd to make me now thus wretched.

Fern. (aside.) Fair pleader, soft ! I'll step 'twixt
him and mercy.

[Exit into the inner apartment.]

Rod. All-powerful truth, I feel thy force ! Yes,
many

A fallen Moor can tell, that o'er and o'er
His arm has sav'd Castilia—and Rodolpho !

Re-enter Fernando with Stephano.

Fern. Behold, my Lord ! how treason lurk'd around,
And fell assassination hover'd o'er you ;
Summon'd, no doubt, by that vindictive fair one,
I found this villain in her chamber hid,
And here behold the ensign of his guilt !

(snatches the dagger from him.)

Rod. Hell could not give a better ! Artful murd'ress,
Thy fiend-like beauty shall not now preserve thee.

Luc. Oh, heav'n ! of what am I accus'd ? Rodolpho,
I'm innocent as wretched. E'en this dagger—

Steph. My Lord, 'tis true ; the princess ne'er de-
sign'd—

Luc. Who question'd thee ? Be dumb, and let
me die !

Oh! spirit of my love, those baneful lips
Which slander'd thee shall ne'er absolve Luceria.

Rod. Wretch, fear'st thou he'll betray thee?

Guards, approach;

Here, take this villain hence; I'll hear no more.

(*Stephano is taken off.*)

Luc. I'm lost. Ye pitying Powers, will ye not
aid me?

Rodolpho, hear me! Plead my cause, Fernando!

Friend of Almanzor, plead his widow's cause!

Alas! 'tis my accuser I invoke—

Speak, thunder; speak in heav'n's own voice my in-
nocence,

Then crush me if thou wilt! I'll meet the blow.

Rod. Peace! most perfidious of thy sex abhorr'd!

Impatient justice rages for thy blood;

Nor dare thy treach'rous eyes sustain this proof—

(*Takes the dagger from Fernando.*)

Ha! what is this? By heav'n! Almanzor's dagger!

From him didst thou receive it? then his hand

Thus strikes thy guilt by me. Die, traitress, die!

(*As he is going to stab her, Antonio rushes in,
seizes Luceria with one hand, and stops Rodol-
pho with the other.*)

Ant. Murd'rer, forbear! Art thou unhurt, my child?

Luc. Oh! 'tis my father! 'tis himself that saves me!

Rod. How's this? Conspiracies on ev'ry side?

(*to Fernando.*)

Call here our guards, let all be crush'd at once.

[*Exit Fernando.*]

Thou too (*to Antonio*) wast then in waiting to assist
Thy daughter's murd'rous scheme? now share her
fate. (*Retires to the other end.*)

Ant. My child defam'd? Strike, ruffian, first at me;
If thou hast a dagger, I've a heart that dares it,
But thou e'en then shalt dread a dying father.
Oh! speak, thou dear wrong'd girl, confront the
tyrant;

Thou'rt in th' asylum of a father's arms.

Luc. Oh! ere my sorrow and remorse destroy me,
First let this bleeding heart imbibe the comfort
A last embrace can give. Who, who condemns thee,
My father? Not Rodolpho, but—thy child!
Yes, 'tis thy child who gives thee death and infamy!
Suffice it that I destin'd yonder steel.
For my own breast, but heav'n, incens'd, has made it
The source of vilest calumny, and more—
Wretch that I am! I have involv'd my father!

Ant. Thou! once so meek, so pious! Pow'r of
heav'n,

Oh pardon, if thou canst, my erring child!
Weep not my doom, but weep thy destin'd guilt;
Weep that I know it, not that I'm its victim.

Enter Fernando, Conrad, and Guards.

Rod. Luceria, listen; 'tis thy fateful hour.
That love thy hatred damp'd, thy tears revive;
Yet triumph not too much, beneath thy feet
Now lies th' abyss down which one word can hurt
thee;
But wouldst thou yet repent thee of thy crime,

These arms shall snatch thee hence, and with an ardour
Like to a lover's who ne'er knew distrust—

Ant. Silence, profaner, Love her! saidst thou?

Thus

I give her to thee; pierce her heart, and seal
Thy passion with her blood. If she be guilty,
Why is thy dagger idle? Strike, I tell thee!
I'll guide thy hand myself. If she be innocent,
Kneel, coward, kneel! ask grace of injur'd virtue,
Nor make her more than vile by being thine!

Rod. May every bitter curse upon me fall
If I delay—'tis madness! 'tis distraction!
Hence with this pair abhorr'd! to some dark cell.
Apart confinethem (*to Luceria*). Look for such a fate.

Ant. O Providence! I dare implore thee, hear me:
Let not these eyes behold my darling's blood;
Let not my darling bleed by savage hands:
Take her ere morn,—in quiet take her hence—
No! do not take her then! reject my pray'r!
—Alas! forgive thy suppliant, he's a father!

(*Luceria leaving the guards.*)

Luc. Yet this last tribute! (*kneeling*) Father!
dearest father!

Can you, traduc'd and murder'd as you are,
Can you, since I partake your lot, forgive me?
Oh! I've destroy'd you, but I've ever lov'd you
With truth, with tenderness, with ardour lov'd you,
And should th' Eternal after death condemn me
For being cause of yours, will you plead for me,
And say I meant it not? will you, my father?
Alas! I merit, as I ask, no more.

Ant. My child ! my soul ! O trust me, could I speak,
 I'd say, I never—never held thee dearer.
 Arise, and mark thy father's dying words ;
 If heav'n do but absolve thee as he does,
 Look to be rank'd among its purest angels.
 Go then, nor call its judgment more in question,
 But die the gentle saint thou ever wast.—
 Once more return, once more let's feel the dew
 Of one another's tears. And now, farewell !

Luc. Farewell, for ever !

Ant. No, for some few hours ;
 And then, Rodolpho, triumph if thou wilt.

[*Exeunt guarded.*]

Rod. Did he say triumph ? yes, and I'll enjoy
 The triumph of a fiend ! Fernando, leave me.

[*Exit Fernando.*]

Night now approaches. Oh, I'll mark her course
 With such a deed as earth shall tremble at !
 Soon will be fix'd thy destiny, Luceria.
 Wake rage, wake vengeance, and the trial dare !
 Ah ! why am I so weak, or she so fair ?
 Her guilt is vanish'd while her charms remain,
 And rage and vengeance wake to sleep again.
 O love, blind love ! now rising, now repress,
 Thou good when lost, thou torment when possessest,
 I feel thy force the strongest in my breast.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE—*A Subterraneous Hall. Bernardo and Almanzor are discovered.*

Bernardo.

YES, thou sad residence of gloom and care,
Whose sullen roofs have oft at midnight hour
Resounded to the sighs of sorrow, breath'd
By wandering priests in penance' mournful strain,
Now let the tenour of your echoes change
To speak alone in thankfulness and joy,
And o'er and o'er repeat, Almanzor lives.
—O thou sole treasure of this aged heart,
How shall I paint th' emotions of my soul
When first I found my cares were not in vain,
And saw thy eyes re-open to the day?
I could have yielded up a life of pain
With no sensation then but gratitude,
Each wrong forgiven and each woe forgot.

Alm. Ah Isidor! thou hast sav'd, indeed, my life,
But canst thou teach me to support it?—never.
Some pangs there are which friendship's voice itself
But renders doubly keen, and such are mine.
Just heav'n! and could I prove a friend's affection
No way but falling by a father's hate?
Distracting, deadly thought!

Bern.

Be calm, my son—

Alm. Be impious wouldst thou say ! Hadst thou
a father

Who plung'd his sword exulting in thy breast,
And as the shades of death yet hover'd o'er thee
Pronounc'd a curse and fled ?—I had one !—Pardon,
Thou best of friends ! I would not damp thy joys.

Enter Carlos.

My faithful soldier Carlos ! sure 'tis he ?
Start not, my friend, to see thy master lives.

Car. Now prais'd a thousand times be heav'n for this !
Oh that all who love you were present now
To be as blest as I am !

Alm. Say—does that angel-being yet survive
To weep for her imagin'd lost Almanzor ?

Car. Alas ! my Lord, your father's rage consign'd
(Nor know I for what cause) th' unhappy princess
To some drear dungeon's confines here below,
With many a cruel vow, that ere the Night
Had run her course he'd seal her mortal doom.

Alm. O heav'n ! perhaps e'en now his murd'rous
hand

Rais'd o'er his helpless prey—He aims ! he strikes !
Ye heav'nly spirits ! ye who lov'd on earth,
To you I most address me, Oh descend,
And from that head ador'd avert the blow !
And thou poor pow'rless wretch who canst not aid her,
Sink to the earth, deplore thy fate, and die.

Bern. Alas ! Almanzor ! Prince ! my son revive !

Alm. O my Luceria ! my deserted love !
Where art thou now ? what flinty couch supports

Thy tender form and drinks thy flowing tears ?
 I see thee now, dear mourner, in thy cell,
 Pale, terrified, expiring in despair,
 No gently-answering voice to soothe thy sorrows,
 Nought but the rugged wall's harsh heavy echo ;
 I hear thee call in vain upon Almanzor—
 Oh ! call on me no more ; I cannot give thee
 Or hope or aid ! no—hope may dwell on earth,
 And pity reign above, but not for me.

Bern. Misjudging youth forbear ! But yestermorn,
 Blind that I was ! I mourn'd thy seeming death ;
 But now—O most regretted happy hour,
 When my proud tears bedew'd a virtuous shrine !
 Thy death had made thy peace with thy Creator ;
 Would thou hadst ne'er arisen to disclaim him !
 I've shar'd of fortune's bitter'st gifts : ingratitude,
 Disgrace, and want, and defamation. Yes,
 Iberia's son and Glory's was defam'd !
 Yet Spaniard as I was, and Soldier too,
 Spaniard and Soldier vanish'd in the Christian.
 As such I clasp'd adversity and smil'd,
 As such I form'd a brighter world below,
 As such, Almanzor, would I see thee one.
 Think not, enthusiast like, that this, or this,

(shewing the cross and rosary.)

Like talismans breed piety within ;
 No, in the soul she dwells and makes that soul a heav'n.
 O piety ! thou purest pow'r divine,
 Who oft hast fill'd this woe-fraught heart with rap-
 ture,

Teach him to know thee, pardon his mistrust,
 Pervade his anguish, make him all thy own !
 And when this frame shall in the tomb repose,
 Let but my spirit know thou art his guide,
 I ask in paradise no other bliss !

Alm. My more than friend and father ! Yet Luceria—

Bern. Speak not, but hear me.

Among these vaults is an ascending way
 Which to the convent leads. The holy brothers,
 Oft wont to wander here, each mystery know
 Relating to these dark and winding paths ;
 Myself can enter ev'ry secret cell
 By ways conceal'd. With Carlos for your guide
 (By me of late instructed how t' explore them)
 Through yonder avenue pursue your course,
 And I meanwhile thro' this ; who first shall reach
 The prison of your bride, let him from thence
 Conduct her here ; that once accomplished, we
 Will then consult on means t' insure her safety. [*Exit.*]

Alm. At length, ye blessed attributes of hope
 And heartfelt transport, once again I hail ye ;
 Oh, shall I find her, see her, save her, yet ?

[*Exeunt Almanzor and Carlos.*]

SCENE—*A Dungeon.*

Luceria discovered reclining on a couch at the farthest end.

Luc. Ye phantoms wont to fright the soul untried,
 Nocturnal gloom and near approaching death,

No influence have ye here ! Too much this heart
Has known of heavier ills to shrink at you ;
A husband dead ! a father doom'd to die !

(Noise is heard of some one approaching.

Thou who approachest, bring'st thou death or mercy ?
Ah ! when the sun is set does some poor flow'r
Yet rear its head and bloom transcendant ? No,
As its lord sinks it droops. And what should I,
Whose guardian planets set in long long night ?

Enter Rodolpho.

Rod. Hail, hail, thou chosen shrine of horror ! come,
Thou queen of blood ! thou fabled fiend of vengeance,
And be my guide, my sov'reign, and my deity !
All-beauteous criminal ! *(to Luceria.)* Most fair
assassin !

O'er whose devoted head affection yet
Spreads his weak wings and flutters to preserve thee.
Look on me !—not with that seducing mien
Which courted me to slavery ; no, assume
The murd'rer's look of hate, and save my glory.

Luc. Dead is this soul to love, to hate, to all
Except the sense of woe and innocence ;
Yes, in the lapse of two revolving suns,
I can count sorrows with the wretch of ages,
Though guiltless as the being of an hour—
Oh ! am I guiltless of thy death, my father ?
Come near me, *(to Rodolpho)* let me look upon thy
hands,

Are they not sprinkled with his blood ? They are !
Inhuman ! was thy thirst so deep ? so quenchless ?

What! ere the stains were gone of poor Almanzor's!
 Yet have those cruel hands one gift in store,
 One which e'en I would deign to take from thee.

Rod. Receive that gift then!

(points the dagger at her and draws it back.)

No, another's heart
 Is doom'd to feel its point ere thine. Antonio's!

Luc. Didst thou hear that? distracted, lost Luceria!
 Didst thou hear nature? didst thou hear him, heav'n?
 And shall he live? and shall Antonio die?
 Rodolpho, think me guilty; take my life,
 The half of which you have destroy'd already,
 But spare my wretched soul a crime like this,
 A parent's death!

Rod. Was e'er despair thus lovely?
 Check, check those tears, give me thy plighted faith,
 And fond forgiving love shall save thy father.

Luc. Alas! that faith—it is already plighted!

Rod. 'Tis false! and think'st thou thus to save
 Antonio?

No—did I e'en believe it, he should perish! [*Exit.*]

Luc. Stay! stab me ere thou leav'st me! No—
 'twere needless—

Re-enter Rodolpho.

Rod. 'Till now proud heart thou ne'er hadst cause
 to bleed;

Look up! Antonio comes! thy father comes!
 This dagger which thy hate design'd for me,
 This dagger then shall pierce his breast, unless—

Luc. O earth! unpitying to refuse to cleave,

And in one grave immerge my woes and me !
 Almanzor ! come, beloved spirit come,
 Before I'm false to thee, and snatch me hence !
 Rodolpho !——

Rod. Speak !

Luc. I'm thine !

Rod. Angels record the words ! she's sworn my bride.

Luc. Thine ! have I sworn it ? Dear and much-
 wrong'd shade,

Forgive thy perjur'd, thy unhappy bride !

'Tis not her heart that wrongs thee.—Who is this
 To whom I've pledg'd my faith ? Ah ! thou art the
 hero

Who laid the pride of nature low in dust ;
 I know thee, streaming with my dearest blood,
 And have I sworn to take the hand which shed it ?
 Hark ! the chains clank which press my father's form,
 And have I sworn to take the hand which gave them ?
 And hast thou too, weak heart, forsworn Almanzor ?
 —Rodolpho, strike ! I now deserve the blow.

Rod. Didst thou not swear, perfidious, to be mine ?

Luc. I did ! I will ! I am !—and there's the contract.

(She gives him the papers Almanzor sent her.)

'Tis done ! my father, I have sign'd thy doom !

Rod. Curst, curst conviction ! art thou then—

(Luceria throwing herself at his feet.)

Thy daughter. *(a pause.)*

Ah ! those dread frowns ! my fate is written in them.

Enter Bernardo.

Bern. (taking her from Rodolpho.)

No ! say not so ! this age-enfeebled arm

Can tear an angel from a murd'rer's grasp !

Rod. Hence ! sland'rous priest ! no servant thou
of heav'n !

Bern. He ne'er can be the servant of his God,
Who is not friend to man and to misfortune.

O thou whose garb I wear, thou who well know'st

I ne'er forgot thee when in loftier state,

Save but this lovely unoffending maid—

And give this son of sorrows to his rage.

—Pride ! pride ! where art thou fled ? Yes it shall
be so. (*kneels.*)

Rodolpho, spare ! Oh, spare a father's hopes

Thou who thyself hadst once a son that lov'd thee.

Rod. Ye plead in vain.—Hence, priest, and leave
me.

Bern. Then, tyrant ! fear the sighs of pow'rless
virtue.

Rod. No more ! I'll hear no more ! Guards, bear
him off.

Bern. (*aside.*) Preserve Almanzor heav'n, and all
is well. [*Exit guarded.*]

Luc. For me shall those white hairs be steep'd in
blood ?

Spare him Rodolpho ! spare that virtuous victim !

Alas ! perhaps while yet I plead for him

My father dies (*looking after Bernardo*). Go vener-
able saint,

And meet thy fate, thou art more blest than I am ;

Will no kind pow'r preserve at least my father ?

Will no kind hand rejoin me to Almanzor ?

Rod. That name infuriates all my soul anew.

(*Fernando enters with a cup of poison.*)

Fern. (aside.) And can th' insatiate monster e'er suppose,

That I could mix a deadly draught for her,
When no advantage would pursue the deed,
And I be more a villain? No, tyrant, no!
This is no fatal life-consuming draught:
But an innoxious soporific juice
From lenient herbs distill'd: this she shall drink;
The potent poison I reserve for thee!

Luc. Are then these eyes forbid to close in peace?
Father forgive me! Oh! that these hearts of steel
Would pity me. Think, if I caus'd thy death
I share it with thee (*drinks*). Now thou'rt free, my
soul,

Now of involuntary guilt absolv'd,
Now fly triumphant hence on wings of hope,
All white and spotless as the robes of day,
And tell thy God, I am as first thou mad'st me;
Death! thou art call'd by some a tract unknown,
But to the pure in soul thou art the path to heav'n.
And thou (*to Rodolpho*), poor slave of earthly pas-
sions, take

Thy victim's pardon.

Rod.

Friend! let us hence.

[*Exit with Fernando.*]

Luc. He's gone! perhaps my father next—O death,
Save me from thought! (*Sinks on the couch.*)

Enter Bernardo.

Bern. Princess, revive ; Rodolpho
Torn by repentant pangs has given me life !

Luc. O kind, kind fate ! to let me breathe my last
In the same arms where late my lord expir'd.
'Tell me of him and let me list'ning die ;
Tell me his words in death, his looks when dead ;
Tell me, if dying, he invok'd me—No !
My heart will tell me that !

Bern. Before his eyes
Death only wav'd his dart, then pass'd away ;
Know then—he lives ! I come to bear thee to him.

Luc. Lives said'st thou ? Lives ! Repeat that
blessed sound !

O Death ! dread pow'r, who, ancient legends say,
Ne'er knew oblation, prayer, or sculptur'd shrine,
To thee behold me raise these grateful hands,
To thee behold me bow this grateful head,
Since from thy fangs thou hast releas'd my lord.

(Attempting to rise, she sinks back.)

Thou liv'st, my love, yet ne'er shall poor Luceria
Once welcome thee to life, once see thee more !
Sad thought ! more deadly than the poison, far—

Bern. All-gracious pow'rs ! the poison ? Lost
Almanzor,

Thou wilt deplore thy old preserver's care,
And say despairing, thou hast liv'd too long.

Luc. No, say not that ; the brave, the great and
good,

The prince rever'd, the man ador'd by all,
The care of heav'n, can never live too long.

Enter Antonio.

My father ! do I see thee ?

Ant.

'Tis my child !

I've not then lost thee yet, my only treasure !

Rodolpho's order some long minutes past, -

(I know not wherefore) call'd me from my prison ;

Oh ! never did the sun's refulgent light

Awake such transports in this grateful breast

As the pale glim'ring flame which led my steps

To thee—to thee, Luceria—

Luc.

And to life !

Yes, I'm inspir'd, my father, I will save thee.

(To Bernardo) Cam'st thou not, holy man, to lead
me hence ?

Bern. I did ; thro' ways sequester'd to the cloister.

Luc. Guide, then, my father there—go,—fly—

Ant.

Fly ! saidst thou ?

Here shall Rodolpho fall, or strike me dead ;

And with my blood upon the stones around

(Like Græcia's dying soldier heretofore)

I'll write, I did not fly !—My child ! part from thee !

Luc. Ah ! we must part—and soon ! stay then
and die

Before my eyes, thou more than cruel father !

Ant. Then—for thy sake I'll go, but not without
thee.

Luc. (*aside.*) Alas ! my strength is fled ! O heav'n,
empow'r me

To place him far beyond Rodolpho's steel,

Nor let him know he leaves me here expiring !—

My father ! I would breathe a prayer alone ;
 Have mercy, mercy on thy child, and leave me ;
 I'll join thee in the cloisters (*aside*). Yes, thro' them
 I shall be borne unconscious to my tomb.

Ant. Forbear to weep, if thou wouldst have me go.

Luc. Yes, I shall cease ere long. Adieu ! heav'n
 guard thee !

Plead, (*to Bernardo.*) holy friar, for my soul's repose.
 Haste, (*to Antonio.*) haste thee hence, thy flight
 will give me peace ;

My heart is rent. (*to Bernardo.*) When I shall
 breathe no more,

Be sure to place me in my mother's tomb.

My father (*to Antonio.*), Oh embrace me once again !

And now away ! think oft on me—farewell !—

[*Exit Antonio with Bernardo.*]

Yet, yet he looks this way—He's now more distant—
 He's gone ! his dying daughter's eyes have lost him !

Enter Rodolpho.

Rod. (*unperceived by Luceria.*) I lov'd and must
 weep o'er her.—Ha ! still living ?

Luc. All-pitying heav'n, wouldst thou allow
 these eyes,

Before they close, once more to view Almanzor !
 —Alas ! forgive this soul, which fain would linger
 Where dwell the objects of its love and suff'rings.

Rod. (*aside.*) Dissembling fair ! yet didst thou
 plead thy innocence.

Luc. Yes, one intended crime, and only one,
 Reminds my trembling heart that heav'n can punish.

O my Almanzor ! what will be thy pangs
 Whene'er thou know'st the dagger I fore'd from thee
 And destin'd for my breast, but which thy father
 Thinks was design'd for him, has caus'd my fate !
 Then when thy tears shall trickle o'er my tomb,
 Do not, my love, too bitterly reproach
 Thy poor, deluded, rash, Luccia's shade.
 And thou all-gracious God, in worlds to come
 Allot my spirit any pain, save only
 The knowledge of Almanzor's anguish here.
 Angels of light, you know I meant not murder,
 (Your lips divine ne'er breath'd a truth more pure)
 Guard you my lov'd, my injur'd father's life ;
 Yet should he fall at length the prey of slander,
 Spread o'er his hallow'd grave your glorious wings,
 Nor let detraction's breath distain his ashes ;
 Receive my soul, and give Rodolpho pardon.

Rod. (rushing forward.) Pardon ! Tho' thou
 canst pardon, heav'n ne'er can.

O innocence ! which I accurst, have slain !
 Raise but once more those eyelids ere they close ;
 And see thy murd'rer shed his blood before thee—

*(As he is going to stab himself, enter Antonio
 and Bernardo.)*

Ant. My child ! I could not wait thy longer stay.

Rod. (letting fall the dagger.) Approach ! look
 there, thou wretched, wretched father !

Ant. She is no more a sufferer ! O my child,
 Thou art at rest ! thy father's prayer is heard—
 Oh ! heard too well !—Here let me die beside thee.

Rod. Wretch ! view thy work !—Turn if thou
canst, Antonio,
From that expiring angel ; repossess
Thy liberty, thy kingdom, and thy throne.

Ant. That throne is here ! 'tis fix'd on these cold
lips—

This pallid form is all my empire now,
And here my freedom rests ; these icy arms
Shall chain me thus for ever to her side.
Wretch ! who hast broke my poor Luceria's heart,
Dar'st thou forbid a miserable father
The privilege of catching her last breath ?

Rod. Thou know'st not all. 'Twas I destroy'd
thy child !

I forc'd her lips t' imbibe the deadly juice.

Ant. Didst thou ? O my poor lost—(*seeing the
dagger.*) Ha ! look Antonio !

And triumph o'er the murd'rer's malice now.

(*takes up the dagger, rushes on Rodolpho, then
starts back.*)

Yet hold ! this heart, by inbred honour sway'd,
Disdains th' assassin's weapon ! Give me, Rodolpho,
A trusty sword, and let this aged arm
By nobler means avenge a daughter's fall.

Rod. Strike here : I cannot draw—look there !
she wakes !

Luc. My dear, dear father ! Peace with thee,
Rodolpho.

Enter Fernando.

Rod. Behold him here ! the wretch whose tale
accurst

First mov'd my rage against that sainted victim ;
 Be his th' atonement. Guards, approach and bear
 To instant death that minister of villainy !

Fern. Away ! I mock thy power. What tho' my art
 Led thee to think Luceria plann'd thy murder,
 And though myself prepar'd the cup of death,
 Yet I shall seem a saint compar'd with thee.
 Know'st thou who fell last night beneath thy sword ?
 It was thy son ! thy guiltless, loyal son !

(*Rodolpho falls into Bernardo's arms.*)

Join' and avenge your prince, (*to the guards*) his
 friend incites you.

(*The soldiers draw and advance towards Rodolpho. Luceria leaving her father and rushing between them.*)

Luc. Stay ! sheathe your swords ! your prince's
 wife commands you.

Almanzor lives ! Rodolpho, yes ! those pangs,
 Those looks, acquit thee. Happy that I am
 To save his life to whom I owe my father's !
 Alas ! he's fled ; in vain my wand'ring eyes—
 My father ! couldst thou leave thy dying child ?
 Speak ! speak once more, if yet my voice can reach
 thee ;

Ah ! sure 'tis he whose arms enfold me now !
 I know him by his tears—I'd live—but—Oh !
 My father—my Almanzor—I faint——

(*sinks back lifeless.*)

Rod. (*recovering*) Hast thou no lightning, heav'n,
 for curst Rodolpho ?

It cannot be ! I have not slain my son !

Bern. (*looking at Luceria.*) Yes, tyrant! thou hast given him death indeed!

Hast pierc'd that noble heart, whose last desire
Was that the knowledge of thy guilty deed
Might with him die. Come next, and prove thy sword
On me! on me his friend! on Isidor!

Rod. Plunge, plunge, ye Powers, this hated sense
in madness!

Art thou then come to join that injur'd pair?

O lost Luceria! O my murder'd son!

Weep o'er thy breathless child, (*to Antonio*) give
thou thy tears

To poor Almanzor (*to Bernardo*), I'll exceed your
sorrows

Vast as they are, in curses on myself.

For thee (*to Fernando*), who late declar'd my son
was guiltless,

Yet caus'd his death, go now thyself and meet it.

(*Fernando is taken off.*)

Bern. Mercy! thou attribute of Christian priests,
If I forget thee, may the blood-stain'd Moor
Take place of me in heav'n! (*to Rodolpho*). Since I
perceive

Thy will was guiltless, know, thy son yet lives!

Rod. Am I so blest?—No, he'll but live t'abhor me!
Might I, Antonio, now conjure thee quit
This scene of death and bless thy subjects' sight?

Ant. I am myself a subject; Death's my lord,
Glory and Joy are also dead, and here

(*pointing to his daughter.*)

In these clos'd eyes have found their beauteous grave.

—Ah! hear I not your cries, my mourning people?

Are not you too my children?

Come, father, come! [*Exit with Bernardo.*]

Rod. (*offers to go and returns.*) And wouldst thou
seek the light of cheerful day?

No, wretch! remain in thy own scene of mis'ry.

Alm. (*without*) Where art thou, my Luceria?

Rod. Hark! 'tis his voice! Almanzor's! let me shun
him. (*retires into an arch of the wall.*)

Enter Almanzor and Carlos by a corner door.

Alm. How much more potent in a lover's soul
Is fear than hope! (*seeing Luceria*) 'O blest enchant-
ing sight!

Soft you; (*to Carlos*) she sleeps. What charms are
in that face!

Carlos. (*aside*) Oh, how my heart misgives me!—

Sure, my lord,
She looks most pale!

Alm. Away! she's not less lovely;

But we should hence. Luceria! come, awake!

(*takes her hand.*)

O Carlos save me! oh, that hand!—'tis cold!

(*falls by her.*)

Carlos. And is it so? Alas! my prince, look up—

Alm. Luceria! O Luceria! Is it true then?

Yes, yes, 'tis she; cold, pallid, senseless, dead!

For this did I escape Rodolpho's sword?

For this did I explore these paths of horror,

And make each cell re-echo with thy name,

To find thee thus, my love, the prey of death?
 Treach'rous, he came and seiz'd thee in my absence,
 It had not been so else; no, I'd have rush'd,
 Have flown between the ghastly king and thee,
 Have from thy bosom push'd the mortal dart,
 Turn'd it on mine, then clasp'd thee and expir'd.

Carlos. Alas! see here my lord!

(*points to the cup on the ground.*)

Alm. Ah! 'tis so.—Father

Thou hast done well! made both thy prey at once.
 Say Carlos, wilt thou mourn thy master dead
 Nor be asham'd to say, thou lov'dst Almanzor?
 But what have I to do with love or kindness?
 No Carlos, no! those pitying drops, misplac'd
 When shed for me, should fall on this fair shrine;
 Mourn for these charms, these virtues here laid low,
 The spirits of the great and good shall join thee,
 And crown'd immortals drop their harps to weep.
 Leave me, my friend. Tell him whom I was wont
 To call my father, I would see him here.

Car. Sir, I'll obey you. Now to seek the friar,
 (*aside.*)

And both united try to force him hence [Exit.

Alm. Kind soul farewell! Before thou canst re-
 turn,

I shall be past the reach of hate or pity.—
 My life! my treasure! my ador'd Luceria!
 Look up and recollect me! Oh! thou canst not;
 The voice of death was stronger than Almanzor's;
 Death bade thee leave me; thou, unkind, obey'd him.

Distraction follows—I'll endure no longer ;
Come friendly weapon, do thy lord's last duty !

(*Draws his sword.*)

Rod. (*rushing on him.*) Ah ! hold thy hand ! let
go that fatal steel

Or plunge it in my breast.

Alm. Ah ! heav'n ! my father !

Rod. Most injur'd that thou art !—I cannot view
thee.

Alm. And come you like a savage to prolong
The woes you feign to pity ! Give me back
That friendly blade : yield to this frantic heart
Which then shall own you are indeed my father.
Yield it my father ! Ah ! why seek to spare
That life your rage for ever has embitter'd ?

Rod. That God who hears me, knows I'd give my
own

To save one pang of thine.

Alm. Dost thou say this ?
And say it from thy soul ?—No, 'twas the voice
The same inhuman voice which late exclaim'd,
“ Die, nor know peace in death, nor rest hereafter !”
Ah ! well your curse has been fulfill'd in part,
For peace and I shall never meet on earth !
But for hereafter—there that curse shall fail !
There is a judge who is not a Rodolpho,
And he shall cure the wounds Rodolpho gave.
Teach me, just Providence, my woes to bear,
And hope with fervency for future bliss !

Rod. Still think'st thou I'm thy mard'rer ? O Al-
nazar,

Thou know'st me not ; it was a guiltless blow.
 In ignorance giv'n, and for another meant.
 Still does thy troubled mind pronounce me false?—
 Look on this beauteous hand of thy dead love ;
 This hand, she dying pledg'd in peace to me,
 And those soft lips, while quiv'ring yet in death,
 Forgave me hers, and quitted me of thine.

Alm. Oh ! gentle, and forgiving as the saints,
 And martyr'd too, like them ! Didst thou a moment
 Stay from thy heav'n, to stretch that hand and look
 Forgiveness with thy closing eyes in vain ?
 No, my Luceria, no ! (*to Rodolpho*) I too acquit
 thee.

Rod. Am I acquitted by thee ? Oh ! my son !
 Now may I dare approach thee ? now enfold thee
 To a repentant heart——

Alm. Mine cannot meet it !
 It bleeds at thy embrace ; there's horror in it.
 Oh ! my ador'd, my honour'd, lost Luceria !
 Can I forgive thy death, yet dare to say
 I love thee still ? My wrongs (*to Rodolpho*) I can
 forgive thee ;

But when I think, but when I look on her,
 All reason melts away, and Nature dies !
 Oh ! mend the recent failure of thy sword ;
 Strike, give me death and rest ! What fear you, sir ?
 She will not shriek, she will not rush between
 And check the blow. Thanks to your care, she cannot !

Rod. And wouldst thou die, and dying still abhor
 me ?

Love may exist in death, but hatred should not ;
 Pardon, Almanzor (*kneels*), pardon for thy father !
 Pardon for one who lov'd Luceria too,
 Who gave her death, yet lov'd and mourns like thee.

Alm. Spirit ador'd ! inspire me, tell my soul
 If he who lov'd can pardon him who wrong'd thee.
 Take it, my father ! tenfold take it ! pardon,
 Pity, affection, all this heart can give.
 If there's a world which shews what injuries are,
 'There is a heav'n which tells us to forgive them.
 Witness that heav'n ! sincere is my forgiveness,
 As are my sorrows ! And you, sacred ashes
 O'er which Almanzor's tears must ever flow,
 Let me attest you too, upon those lips
 Where never falsehood dar'd affix her seal.
 —Amazement ! mighty heav'n support me !—Yes !
 Those lips now tremble, and those eyelids move !

Rod. Ye Pow'rs ! what's now prepar'd ?

Luc. Ah me !—where am I ?—
 All dark—all silent——

Alm. Oh ! if 'tis not illusion, if indeed
 Thou art my lost lamented living love——

Luc. Almanzor ! my Almanzor !
 And do I live ! and am I thine again ?
 Yes, my heart tells me so, and breaks with joy !

Rod. Behold me lost in thankfulness and wonder !
 Heav'n ! I have prov'd thy mercy, I'll deserve it ;
 Take (*to Luceria*) with Almanzor's hand Rodolpho's
 blessing,
 And fly to hail thy reinstated father.

Enter Bernardo.

Bern. Prepare to hear a tale of deep-laid guilt,
Which heav'n, all-gracious heav'n, has frustrated,
Fernando, ere he suffer'd, all confess'd ;
It was your crown he aim'd at: (*to Rodolpho*)
'twas for this

He plann'd the ruin of the prince and you ;
When fearing that the widow of Almanzor
(For such he deem'd her then) might claim Castilia,
He sought the aid of a somnific juice,
T' involve her in a state resembling death ;
Intending, when the crown was his secure,
To hide the helpless victim in a convent ;
Meanwhile you gave the poison to his charge
Meant for her lips, but he, conceiving you
The rival most essential to remove,
Gave but the opiate mixture to the princess,
And had for you reserv'd the draught of death.

Alm. Was this Fernando? wretched man!—yet joy
Should now be most transcendant in my soul ;
My best belov'd Luceria, thou art mine !

Enter Antonio, Carlos, Agnes, and attendants.

Ant. My child ! where art thou ?

Luc. My father ! O how many tears I've caus'd you !
(*Antonio and Luceria embrace.*)

Rod. But haste we from this inauspicious place
Where frowning Mis'ry almost fix'd her reign,
And still her shadowy vestiges affright us ;
You to your Leon's longing arms return, (*to Ant.*)
You to be happy in each other's love.

(*to Almanzor and Luceria.*)

And thou, (*to Bernardo*) if yet thy lips have not
pronounc'd

The last dread vow, resume thy glorious self,
And witness thy Almanzor's future greatness.

Bern. Ah no ! my habits, my desires, forbid it.
The world and I can never meet again ;

For solitude to me hath countless charms,
And lures me to enjoy ten thousand blessings.

* It is a fortress never to be stormed :

It is a harbour where no billows rage :

It is a wall of adamantine strength.

In solitude Almanzor's name shall reach me,

And oft the fervency of pious prayer

Shall waft Almanzor to the gates of Heaven,

And plead his virtues at Jehovah's throne.

† Fain would I seek some desert's calm retreat.

Where in this musing, solitary breast,

Divine Philosophy may hold her reign ;

And where sweet Hope may lull declining age.

* τῆτο ἡμῶν τείχος· τῆτο ἀσφάλεια· τῆτο λιμὴν
ἀκύμαντος· τῆτο θησαυρὸς κυρίων ἀγαθῶν.

S. Chrysostomi *Epistola* ad Innocentium, tom. 7.
edit. Savil. See also the eloquent Homily on
Eutropius, tom. 8. where a similar passage
occurs.

† This passage, down to "furrowed cheek," I have translated
from the elegant and pathetic conclusion of Nazianzen's *Homily*,
De Vitâ suâ.

Ζητῶ τιν' οἶκειν ἐκ κακῶν ἐρημίαν,
Οὐ μοι τό Θεῖον νῦν μονῶ ζητάμενον,
Ελπὶς τε κάθη τῶν ἄνω γρηγορότερος.

And smooth with nurturing hand this furrowed
cheek.

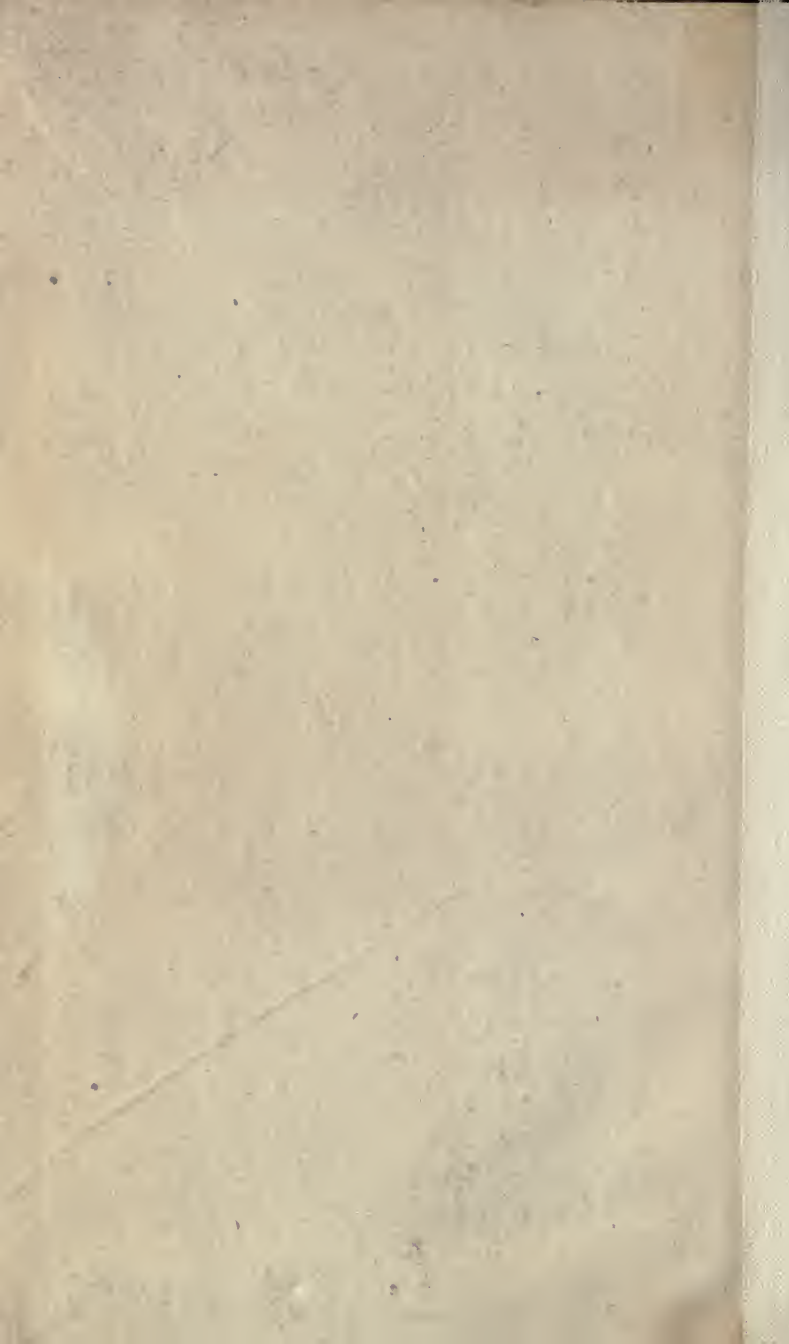
My children, mark the blessing which awaits
The Virtuous Man, a Heaven-descended gift,
And grave this doctrine on your hearts' best tablet.
Tho' storms may frown upon his Morn of Life,
And dim his mid-day with increasing gloom,
A cloudless Evening opens to his view
His sun serenely sets, to rise reumed
In happier Realm, and nothing can obscure
The parting lustre of his well-spent day!

FINIS.

T. GILLET, PRINTER, .

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